

156E429  
PEN PHOTOGRAPHS

OF

CHARLES DICKENS'S READINGS.

Taken from Life

BY KATE FIELD,

AN AMERICAN.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:

TRÜBNER & CO., 60 PATERNOSTER ROW.

BOSTON, U. S.:

JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,

Late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood, & Co.

1871.

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## PREFACE.

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TO connect this book with the art of Photography, by even the slight link of a title, may be considered presumptuous ; but when it is remembered that the best photographs fail to do justice to their originals, and that the most interesting subjects generally receive the worst treatment, I hope to be exonerated from so grave a charge.

The following pages are the inspiration of gratitude. Owing to Charles Dickens twenty-five of the most delightful and most instructive evenings of my life, I have photographed them with the hope of clinching their recollection in the minds of many, and of giving to others some faint outline of a rare pleasure, the like of which will ne'er come to us again. Now that the great man has "vanished forevermore" from the "garish lights" of St. James Hall, the republication of this book, in an enlarged and more durable form, is deemed opportune, and that I have been unable to

catch the fleeting power of Dickens's last and finest reading, "The Murder of Nancy Sykes," declared by the veteran Macready to be "two Macbeths rolled into one," will ever remain a source of keen regret.

"It being low water, he went out with the tide."

The joy of yesterday is the dead past of to-day, and I lay this offering at the feet of Charles Dickens, the actor, responsive to his prayer, "Lord, keep my memory green!"

THE AUTHOR.

December 25, 1870.

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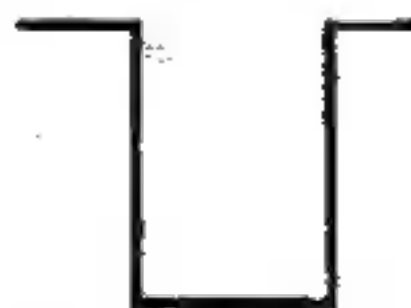


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THE WELCOME IN BOSTON.

XXIV K. 47

"A hundred thousand welcomes: I could weep,  
And I could laugh; I am light, and heavy: welcome:  
A curse begin at very root of his heart  
That is not glad to see thee!"

ONCE in a generation all hearts throb in unison to the music of some great master whose humanity is broad enough to embrace mankind. Charles Dickens is such a master. His hand has struck chords that scarce a loving Christian soul has not echoed, with a silent blessing upon Him who sent so humane a genius into the world. It is not strange, then, that on a raw, gray morning in December, 1867, Boston experienced a new sensation in watching a motley crowd, ranged in single file before the door of Messrs. Ticknor and Fields's publishing house, pursuing its winding way thus



along Hamilton Place, and dragging its slow length down Tremont Street, with the distance of an eighth

of a mile between its head and tail. So closely packed was the human file as to seem as if the living ■■■ had been caught and skewered for some especial cannibalistic festival, preparatory to being roasted on a spit. Had such ■ fate been in reserve, it would have been hailed with delight for the choice between freezing and roasting is easily made while undergoing either process. Those who roast prefer to freeze, and those who freeze prefer to roast. On this eventful morning, fire in any form would have been regarded as "a blessing in disguise"; and if any clerical believer in the good old-fashioned hell had then and there improvised a revival, he would have made converts of them all.

Truckmen, porters, clerks, "roughs," clergymen, merchants, gamblers, speculators, gentlemen, loafers, white men, black men, colored men, boys, and *three women*! Broadcloth, no cloth! Fine linen, doubtful linen, no linen! The lion stood up with the lamb. The wild animals of Boston were merged into one unhappy family, and the great democratic principle on which our glorious institutions are founded was more practically illustrated than it will ever be again, if good republicans have a voice in the matter. "Here 's yer Boston aristocracy!" screamed out a young gentleman bearing a striking likeness to Young Bailey, of "Mrs. Todgers's Commercial Boarding-House." This pleasantry seemed to afford infinite delight to a "party" who replied with ■ wink of the eye and a grin that broke over his piebald countenance as

the sun breaks upon the dawn, that "the people of Boston had never before had an opportunity of seeing the *elight* of the city standing in a row." The purity of this "party's" French accent was only equalled by the purity of his breath, the architecture of which might have been attributed to the composite order, consisting as it did of bad whiskey and stale tobacco, injudiciously mingled.

The Dickens fever set in as early as half past six o'clock. Victims whom the epidemic had marked for its own, and who in consequence had passed a sleepless night, rose before the sun got out of bed and, chewing the cud of fancy, on which substantial food several hundred of the Boston aristocracy breakfasted in honor of Charles Dickens, rushed to the scene of action. Among these enthusiastic Dickensites were two of the three heroines whose unexampled fortitude should be remembered in their epitaphs. Reinforcements came thick and fast, until, at half past seven o'clock, seventy-five human beings were going through the various stages of congelation. One hour before noon the human sandwiches were counted by hundreds, and could they have eaten themselves would have done so with pleasure.

To stand "a long way on the frosty side of cool" from half past six to nine o'clock at the earliest, — for not until then were the doors of Messrs. Ticknor and Fields's establishment thrown open, — and several hours longer at the latest, was not conducive to a rapid circulation of the blood; yet there never ■■■■ more good-

natured crowd. They looked their situation coolly in the face, and determined to secure their prize ■ perish ■ the attempt. They stamped their feet and sent forth their voices in song. Perhaps the singing was more boisterous than hilarious, for it requires ■ singularly vivid imagination to be joyful when undergoing the experience of Sir John Franklin ■ his search for a northwestern passage; nevertheless, the attempt denoted ■ amiable disposition, and this was significant. In compliment to the great man ■ whose altar they were sacrificing themselves, they sang "The Ivy Green," as appropriate to the ■ of the year. Then, making ■ diversion, they violently attacked "John Brown," in whose soul they seemed to take great satisfaction for the reason of its "*marching on!*"

"Bully for John Brown!" exclaimed a "Pabdee." "I congratulate the gintlemun wid all me heart, I do. Shure an' if he'd say a good word for us, I'd remember it next election time. By me sowl, it ud be ■ blissid thing ■ if ■ soles ■ marching on, gintlemin!"

"You're right there, my friend," replied a voice attached to a genteel suit of clothes. "Old Milton may have thought that 'they also serve that only stand and wait,' but I don't think he ever tried it when the thermometer was below zero."

"Milton? an', faith, who's Milton? ■ he a member of Congriss?"

"No, my friend, a poet."

"A poet indade! ■ jabbers, he must have took ont

a poetical license for such blathering stuff ■ that. I'm a porter, an' if Milton wants to know the facts o' standin' an' waitin', I'm the man. John Brown's the boy for my money."

"Dr. Kane can't hold a candle to us," muttered another voice. "The open polar sea won't be discovered in a hurry, if it depends upon me."

Stamping, singing, fun, and profanity ruled the long, cold hours, and when these staple articles failed, cigars and "pocket-pistols" came to the rescue. It was astonishing to see how many gentlemen were armed with this peculiar weapon, and how often they defended themselves with it. Substitutes were provided to relieve guard; many were visited by friends whose money they held, and who, acting in the professional capacity of bottle-holders, exhorted them to stand firm. Some, however, were obliged to drop from the line from sheer exhaustion; and others, having put too large a number of enemies into their mouths, were assisted to a neighboring station by the gentlemanly police. The Chinese article, "tea," seemed to be held in universal esteem, and it was quite remarkable to notice how many persons stepped round the corner to get a cup of a beverage that is said to cheer but not inebriate. Strange to relate, however, the "tea" drunk on this occasion had so peculiar an aroma ■ to warrant the belief that it must have been drawn from Mrs. Gamp's favorite tea-pot."

When the crowd was densest and the humor at its



height, a calm stranger, evidently from parts unknown, approached, and, animated by a sentiment of curiosity, asked a bystander the cause of so large and excited a gathering. " 'Tain't election-time down here, is it ? "

" O no, we 're buying tickets, sir."

" Buying tickets ? — for what ? "

" For Dickens's Readings."

" Dickens ! Who the d—l is Dickens ? "

" Why, don't you know ? — the great novelist."

" Never heard of him in all my born days, *but if there is any critter on airth that can keep such a crowd together with the mercury clean way out of sight, d—d if I don't see him !*"

Whereupon the previously calm stranger took his place in the line and enthusiastically proposed three cheers for Dickens ! His ultimate opinion is robed in impenetrable mystery.

Besieged without; Ticknor and Fields's establishment was finally besieged within, and let it be recorded that when the sale of tickets *did* begin, one of the heroines who had held her position to the last was, by a common impulse of generosity, and by a unanimous vote, allowed to take the precedence.

While the heroic woman within the building was receiving the reward of virtue, — it is ■ great comfort to know that virtue *does* occasionally get rewarded, — a gentleman in the line outside took occasion to address his neighbors in the following eloquent and impressive

words. He had been consoling himself with a great deal of "tea." "Gen'lemen," said he, waving his right hand ~~■~~ high and contemplating the spire of Park Street Church with peculiar affection,—"gen'lemen, there ~~■~~ but three men who have stamped themselves upon the civilization of the Nineteenth Century. Those men, gen'lemen, are Charles Shakespeare, William Dickens, and—myself. Let any one deny it who dares!" Here the peer of Charles Shakespeare and William Dickens looked so determined to stamp upon humanity particularly, as well as upon civilization generally, as to be unceremoniously removed by a guardian of the peace. O Dickens, how much "tea" was that day drunk in thy name! How many pairs of lungs had "damp door-steps settled on them" because of thee!

"Dickens!" exclaims a young man of ardent temperament, "if I did not love his genius I should wish he had never been born. To please the object of my affection, and other less particular friends, I stood eight hours in 'the cold, cold blawst,' with a villanous tobacco-pipe before me and a shocking bad hat immediately behind, the owner of which last-named article beguiled the time by poking me in the back, and asking me whether I would n't swap tiles and improve my personal appearance. After enduring several hours of puffing and poking, I rather wished that Charles Dickens had never crossed the Atlantic. When I did reach the ticket-office, my patience was requited with reserved seats in a rear

gallery! The friends for whom I fought and froze failed to appreciate my valuable services, and assured me that it would have been better to have remained at home and saved their money. The object of my affections could only be appeased by my purchasing tickets of speculators, at ten dollars apiece. Upon going down town after my arctic expedition, I discovered that I had lost an opportunity of making five thousand dollars in stocks; but then, as an offset, I did gain, at considerable cost, ■ first-class influenza that terminated in acute rheumatism, to which I am likely to be subject for the remainder of my life. The British government owes me a pension."

Such was the excitement attending the sale of tickets for the first course of Dickens's Readings in Boston, and the second was like unto it; yet, lest the seemingly Munchausen tale be received with incredulity, the report of a Boston journal is here given, *verbatim et literatim*:—

"As early as half past seven o'clock in the evening the crowd commenced to gather, and a few persons stationed themselves at the door of the Meionaon, determined to secure good seats even at the cost of a night of waiting. From that time to the opening of the doors the numbers gradually increased. At ten o'clock P. M., about fifty persons had assembled; at eleven, the number had increased to sixty; at midnight, there were one hundred in line; and at two o'clock, from one hundred to two hundred were waiting. The line by this time ex-

tended into Montgomery Place, and various were the means devised by those who composed it to make the time pass quickly and agreeably.

“Some of those in waiting brought arm-chairs in which to rest their weary limbs, and one person, determined to be as comfortable as possible, rolled himself up in blankets and stretched out on a mattress which he had provided. The crowd were in good spirits, and every little incident was made the subject of a joke and laugh. As usual on such occasions the musical element was not wanting, and by the singing of popular airs — ‘Johnny comes marching Home,’ ‘John Brown’s Body,’ ‘We won’t go home till Morning,’ etc., etc. — the hours were beguiled, more to their own amusement, probably, than to the gratification of the residents on Montgomery Place, whose slumbers must have been somewhat disturbed by the noise without. The crowd was not altogether composed of representatives from the better portion of our community, and ominous black bottles were frequently passed from one to the other, the contents of which seemed to add not a little to the hilarity of the occasion.

“This morning the crowd was very great. Many late comers not inclined to play fairly were assembled about the entrance, determined, if possible, when the doors were opened, to make a rush and obtain an early admission. Others formed an additional line up Tremont Street as far as Montgomery Place. The ‘genuine’ line extended down the north side of Montgomery Place,

across the end, and out to Tremont Street again. Citizens on their way to business were much amused at the bustling among the crowd of waiters, and the strife after good position in line, and many stopped opposite to view the exciting spectacle. The steps and windows of the Tremont House were crowded with spectators, and all teams stopping in the vicinity were put into requisition for standing-places.

"At about half past eight o'clock the outside door was opened. The rush towards it was for a while terrible, and it was only by the most strenuous efforts that the force of fifteen policemen who were present could hold them at bay. As it was, quite a number who had not a position in line succeeded in getting within the doors, to which so many were anxiously looking forward. In a few minutes, however, the police force rallied, and with free use of their clubs, giving not a few an aching head, and one at least a wound from which the blood flowed freely, they succeeded in clearing the sidewalk of all but the original line. After this, the long procession moved steadily forward with little interruption until about five minutes of nine, when the checks which gave the right to purchase tickets, five hundred in number, having been all distributed, the doors were closed. The line, which even then was some two hundred feet long, was broken up, and many of the persons in waiting went away disappointed. Others remained to purchase tickets of those more fortunate. Several ladies were noticed in

line among those who succeeded in obtaining admission."

With this chronicle we may well exclaim "*Ohe ! jam-satis*," and, turning to New York, mark the ravages made by the Dickens fever upon metropolitan constitutions.



## THE WELCOME IN NEW YORK.

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NOT being a bird, and consequently having no particular fondness for worms as an article of diet, I never could be made to see the beauties of early rising. It is a poetical delusion. It means wet feet in summer and cold feet in winter. It means a total want of appreciation of those delightful day-dreams that possess the brain which refuses to wake up all over and emulate the lark in a very bad habit. It is satisfactory to look back upon my life and know that larks have received no moral support from me; and yet I must confess that when I took up the Tribune on the 29th of November, 1867, at the respectable and civilized hour of ten o'clock A. M., my young blood froze and each particular hair stood on end as I read with terror and dismay that tickets for Charles Dickens's readings had been selling for two hours! My first impulse was to drink a cup of cold poison and quietly retire from this vale of tears in ■ way becoming disappointed affections; but I finally decided that before going to the Dickens by a process which would seriously interfere with my return to a mundane sphere, — a return

which might be desirable should ■ change of base not prove all that fanoy painted it, — I would follow the immortal Mrs. Chick's advice and "make an effort."

It is an immutable law that "things" are never to be found when one's salvation depends upon their immediate possession. The agony I endured in collecting myself on that Friday morning no words can describe. Never in my life had I played such an aggravating game of hide-and-seek, and I finally rushed out of the house with ■ white glove on one hand and a black glove on the other. Perhaps I walked to Steinway Hall, but my private opinion is that I flew on the wings of that bird of which I so much disapprove. Whether I walked or flew, I know that at eleven o'clock I stood in front of Steinway Hall, hopelessly gazing at a queue of my fellow-beings that extended far beyond the bounds of human patience. Encountering the glance of a benevolent policeman, who seemed to feel for me, and having heard that there is safety in the law, I ventured to address this imposing guardian of the peace.

"How long have these people been standing here?" I asked.

"Well, some on 'em two and some on 'em three hours."

"And when did people *begin* to stand here?"

"Nigh about seven o'clock, and they wriggled round Irving Place just like a snake."

"I suppose all the good seats are gone."

"Certain cure."

"What do you think my chances would be if I should take my place at the end of that file?"

"Well, I would n't give twenty-five cents for 'em. By the time you get to that 'ere ticket-office, there won't be standing-room for sale."

I gazed at that ticket-office and thought of the touching song, "Thou art so near, and yet so far." Once more the idea of cold poison suggested itself, but suddenly I was seized with a brilliant inspiration.

"Have members of the press no privileges?" I inquired, endeavoring to look like a distinguished individual.

I am afraid I did not succeed in my attempt, for a man in the file, who, under the crushing influence of humanity before and behind him, was gradually being deprived of his breath, panted out in a shrill voice, "Reckon we 're all *members of the press* to-day!"

I glanced reproachfully at that man, nor was I consoled by the tender interest of the policeman, who evidently regarded members of the press as something lower than angels, — which they are. Many are a great deal lower.

"The best thing for you to do is to see Mr. Dolby, and you 'll find him inside, — perhaps."

I went inside. I wandered up and down that capacious building in vain. Nobody seemed to know that any one bearing the name of Dolby had ever been born. One Teutonic individual had the impertinence to ask

"how I spell him, and what for I want him?" This was too much. I was about to beat ■ hasty retreat when I encountered ■ person who looked ■ if he possessed considerable information, but had an inborn reluctance to part with any of it. Nevertheless, I ventured to address him in ■ persuasive voice.

"Is Mr. Dolby here, sir?"

"No." (Spoken as if it had been bitten in two.)

"Has he been here?"

"Yes."

"Do you know where he is?"

"No."

"Can you tell me the name of his hotel?"

"Westminster."

Delightful man! "Conversational" man! "What a noticing" man! "What a" man "for repartee"! At last I had a lever with which to work. I would employ strategy. The greatest battles had been won by it. Mr. Dolby was a scholar and a gentleman; Mr. Dolby was handsome; Mr. Dolby was good-natured. I would appeal to him as one human being to another. I would appeal to him as a son, as a brother, ■ a husband, as a father! He might not be a brother, nor ■ husband, nor a father, but he could not possibly escape being a son, and the reference to him in other domestic relations would be accepted ■ ■ tribute to his worth; it would signify that, if he is not, he ought to be a brother, ■ husband, and ■ father. I would tell him of the tremendous influence

of the press, and ■ an original peroration which could not fail to take his reason captive, I would tell him that "the pen is mightier than the sword!"

I did. I wrote Mr. Dolby a letter which would have "drawn tears from even the manliest eye," and then retired to my native heath to recuperate my shattered forces. Need I say that Mr. Dolby hearkened to my petition? There stood beside him as he opened that letter a guardian angel in the garb of man, who said unto Dolby, "The press is a mighty organ; respect its organists."

The way in which I went about with those tickets in my pocket; the way in which I exhibited them to those who had no tickets, and, what was more, never expected to get any, not being people who would encourage speculators, ought to make Mr. Dolby feel that he has not lived in vain. I slept with those tickets under my pillow, "lest somebody should get over the wall of the back yard and steal them"; and had I not lost confidence in banks I should have deposited my treasures in a vault during the day.

Such a crowd as assembled in front of Steinway Hall on the night of the first reading! Carriage after carriage deposited its burden on the sidewalk, while a throng of men and boys, who may be called the "outs," choked up the passage-way and gazed at the fortunate possessors of tickets with about the same expression as that with which hungry children eye the contents



of pastry-cooks' windows. Speculators to right of us, speculators to left of us, speculators in front of us, volleyed and thundered. The very best seats in the house were held by these vampires. They knew it, and great was the profit thereof; for it would have cost some people a great deal more — in feelings — to have remained away than to have paid ten or twenty dollars for a ticket. An American public is not to be held in check by gigantic swindling; hence the breed of vampires.

Past "outs" and speculators, we began the ascent of stairs that never were quite so long as on this occasion, but which, accomplished, we felt as Hercules must have felt after the termination of one of his labors. The entrance into the hall was quite curious, the assemblage being one vast interrogation point. Everybody was on the *qui vive* to see who had been shrewd enough to secure seats, and apparently seemed astonished that anybody had been as clever as himself. The salutation between friends was not the ordinary "How are you?" but, for this night only, "Where did you get your ticket?" Then followed a thrilling narration of hairbreadth 'scapes, listened to with breathless attention.

Once seated, it was a pleasure to look upon the multitude that completely filled the vast hall. If Charles Dickens was not to be tried by his peers — a good fortune that never yet befell genius — he had invoked the best audience that New York can produce. There were poets, authors, artists, actors, and managers; there were women

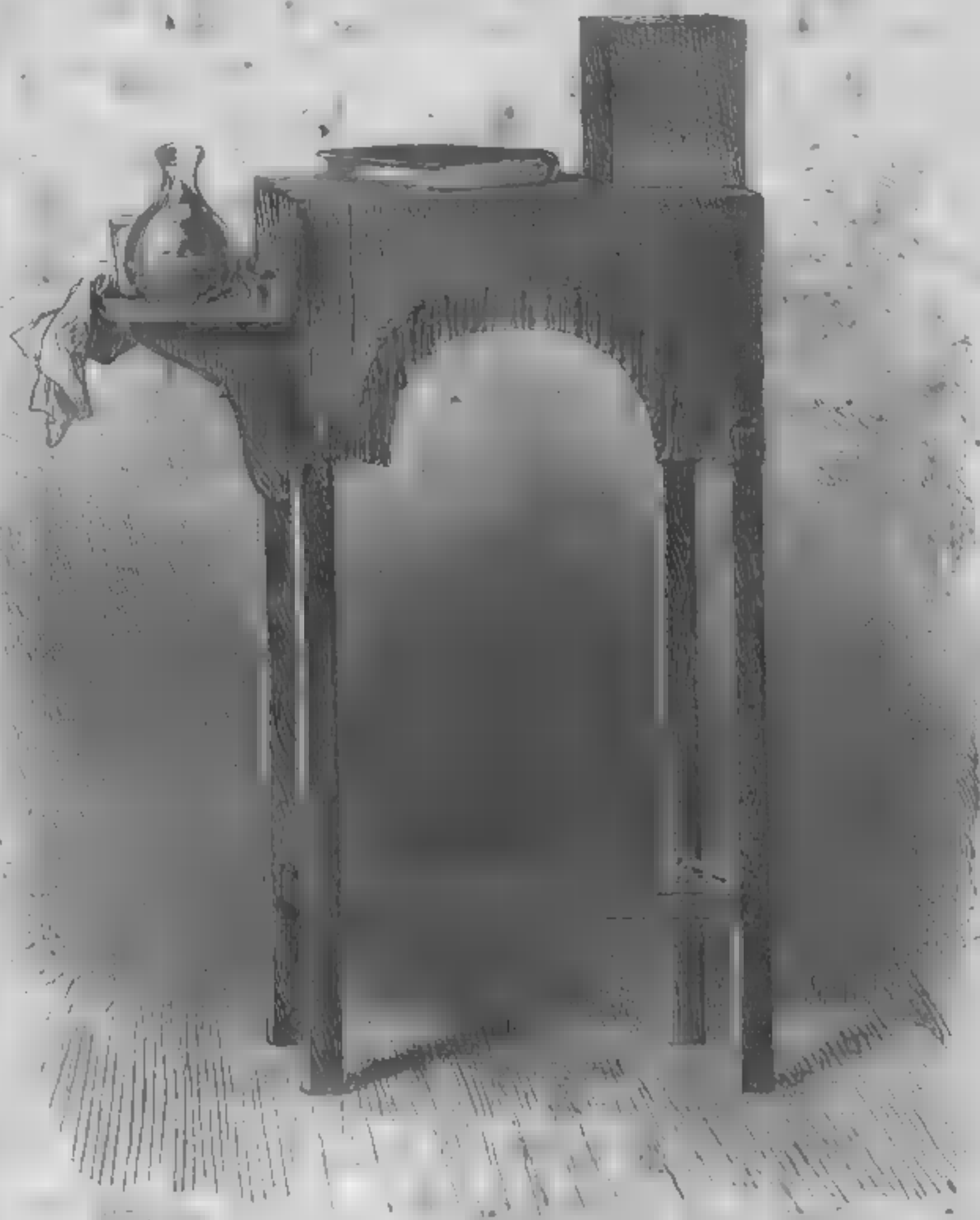


of culture, lawyers, doctors, bankers, and merchant-princes. The fourth estate shone with unusual lustre. "Dailies" and "Weeklies" were scattered in every direction, and the very air seemed redolent of printer's-ink.

Then Charles Dickens came, and we saw and heard, and he conquered ; not all at once, but gradually, slowly, and surely. However, "let me not anticipate"; yet must I say that

"All my reports go with the modest truth ;  
No more, nor clipped, but so."





THE READING DESK.

## PEN PHOTOGRAPHS.

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### I.

#### THE DESK AND THE READER.

ONE glance at the platform is sufficient to convince the audience that Dickens thoroughly appreciates "stage effect." A large screen of maroon cloth occupies the background; before it stands a light peculiar design, on the inner left-hand corner there peers forth a miniature desk, large enough to modulate the reader's book. On the right table, and somewhat below its level, is a repose a carafe of water and a tumbler. "Tation and a form indeed," covered with what lighter in color than the screen, conceals the table, whereby it is plain believes in expression of figure as well as of does not throw away everything but his head and according to the ordinary habit of ordinary speaker. About twelve feet above the platform, and somewhat in advance of the table, is a horizontal row of gas-jets with a tin reflector; and midway in both perpendicular gas-

pipes there is one powerful jet with glass chimney. By this admirable arrangement, Dickens stands against a dark background in a frame of gaslight, which throws out his face and figure to the best advantage. With the book "Dickens" stranded on the little desk, the comedian Dickens can transform a table into a stage; and had the great novelist concluded, at the last moment, not to appear before us, this ingenious apparatus would have taught us a lesson in the art of reading.

He comes! A lithe, energetic man, of medium stature, crosses the platform at the brisk gait of five miles an hour, and takes his position behind the table. This is

Dickens, whose name has been a household word in England and America for thirty years; whose books have been the joy and solace of many a weary heart and whose first glance disappointed me. I thought I should have to have him entirely unlike himself; but I began to speculate on how Charles Dickens *ought* to have the matter up, and wisely concluded that he knew his own intentions better than any one

He has a broad, full brow, a fine head, — which, in a man of such power and energy, is singularly small for the base of the brain, — and a cleanly cut profile. There is a slight resemblance between him and Louis Napoleon in the latter respect, owing mainly to the nose; but it is unnecessary to add that the faces of the two men are totally different. Dickens's eyes are light-

blue, and his mouth and jaw, without having any claim to beauty, possess a strength that is not concealed by the veil of iron-gray mustache and generous imperial. His head is but slightly graced with iron-gray hair, and his complexion is florid.

If any one thinks to obtain an accurate idea of Dickens from the photographs that flood the country, he is mistaken. He will see Dickens's clothes, Dickens's features, as they appear when Nicholas Nickleby is in the act of knocking down Mr. Wackford Squeers; but he will not see what makes Dickens's face attractive, the geniality and expression that his heart and brain put into it. In his photographs Dickens looks as if, previous to posing, he had been put under an exhausted receiver and had had his soul pumped out of him. This process is no beautifier. Therefore let those who have not been able to judge for themselves believe that Dickens's face is capable of wonderfully varied expression. Hence it is the best sort of face. His eye is at times so keen as to cause whoever is within its range to feel morally certain that it has penetrated to his boots; at others it brims over with kindness. "It is like looking forward to spring to think of seeing your beaming eye again," wrote Lord Jeffrey to Charles Dickens years ago, and truly, for there is a twinkle in it that, like a promissory note, pledges itself to any amount of fun — within sixty minutes. After seeing this twinkle I was satisfied with Dickens's appearance, and became resigned to the fact of his not resembling the Apollo Belve-



dere. One thing is certain, — if he did resemble this classical young gentleman, he never could have written his novels. Laying this flattering unction to my soul, I listen.

## II.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

IN December, 1843, all England was roused from selfish slumbering by the sound of a carol. It was no carol by a bird; it was sung by a man, and that man Charles Dickens. He called it "A Christmas Carol," but the Anglo-Saxon world has known it ever since as *The Christmas Carol*; as if, since the birth of Him who made a holy day of the twenty-fifth of December, humanity had heard no song worthy of being likened unto it. How wonderfully significant may so small a particle of speech become! Twenty-seven years this Carol has been sung, yet every twelvemonth its pure melody receives as hearty a welcome as Christmas itself. Hungry ears have listened to no better hymn of praise, hungry eyes have feasted on no truer or more loving counsel.

Immediately after its first publication, and while the Carol was running through twenty editions, that master of English, and therefore most genial critic, William M. Thackeray, being then on the Continent, received a box of novels. It was a welcome box to Thackeray, notwithstanding it entailed the necessity of reviewing, for among those novels, off which he skimmed the cream, lay the Carol that originated a new field of literature,—Dickens's

holiday romance,—without which the world of to-day would be poor indeed.

“Who can listen to objections regarding such a book as this?” wrote big-hearted Thackeray in *Fraser's Magazine*. “It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness. The last two people I heard speak of it were women; neither knew the other, or the author, and both said, by way of criticism, ‘God bless him!’ A Scotch philosopher, who nationally does not keep Christmas day, on reading the book, sent out for a turkey, and asked two friends to dine,—this is a fact! Many men were known to sit down, after perusing it, and write off letters to their friends, not about business, but out of their fulness of heart, and to wish old acquaintances a happy Christmas. Had the book appeared a fortnight earlier, all the prize cattle would have been gobbled up in pure love and friendship, Epping denuded of sausages, and not a turkey left in Norfolk. His royal highness's fat stock would have fetched unheard-of prices, and Alderman Bannister would have been tired of slaying. . . .

“As for Tiny Tim, there is a certain passage in the book regarding that young gentleman, about which a man should hardly venture to speak in print or in public, any more than he would of any other affections of his private heart. There is not a reader in England but that little creature will be a bond of union between the author and him; and he will say of Charles Dickens, as the woman

said just now, 'God bless him!' What ■ feeling is this for a writer to be able to inspire, and what a reward to reap!"

Well, on the 10th of January, 1853, Mr. Arthur Ryland, a member of the Birmingham Philosophical Institution, read a letter from Dickens, received the day after a Literary and Artistic Banquet, containing an offer to visit Birmingham the following Christmas, and read his Christmas Carol, in the Town Hall, for the benefit of an embryonic Scientific and Literary Society, to which Dickens insisted that as many as possible of the working class should be admitted free. "The reading," he said, "would take about two hours, with a pause of ten minutes half-way through. There would be some novelty in the thing, as I have never done it in public, though I have in private, and (if I may say so) with a great effect on the hearers. I was so inexpressibly gratified last night by the warmth and enthusiasm of my Birmingham friends, that I feel half ashamed this morning of so poor an offer. But as I had decided on making it to you before I came down yesterday, I propose it nevertheless." A poor offer indeed! Dickens had distinguished himself in private theatricals; he had read selections from his works before delighted audiences of friends; he had given evidence of such unusual dramatic ability as to render it almost criminal for him to longer hide his light under a domestic bushel. To appear as a reader of his own writings would be of great pecu-

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niary benefit to the Birmingham Association, besides adding one more link to the chain that bound Charles Dickens to the people of England. Birmingham accepted the offer with delight, and Charles Dickens made a reality of his ideal Christmas Carol. So great a triumph was then and there achieved as to cause Dickens to discover that he had been living but half a life; and from 1853 to 1869 Great Britain and Ireland hailed Dickens the actor with as much enthusiasm as Dickens the novelist.

The amateur reader, however, did not visit Birmingham entirely ignorant of the effect he was likely to produce, having been coaxed and argued into giving an experimental reading in the sleepy old city of Peterborough, for the purpose of helping the Mechanics' Institute out of debt. "Here is an opportunity," wrote Dickens's tempter, "for testing the matter without risk. An antediluvian country town, an audience of farmers' sons and daughters, rural shopkeepers, and a few country parsons, — if interest can be excited in the stolid minds of such a Boeotian assemblage, the success of the reader will be assured wherever the English language is spoken. On the other hand, if failure results, none will be the wiser outside this Sleepy-Hollow circle." The tempter triumphed, Dickens's sole stipulation being that the prices should range from a sixpence to two shillings, in order to meet the limitations of working-men's incomes. He stipulated in vain. Every place was taken a fortnight before the

reading, and guineas and half-guineas were paid for front seats !

There was little in the paraphernalia of Dickens's first reading to remind the public of his last. At one end of the large Corn Exchange, where the entertainment was given, Dickens caused to be erected a tall pulpit of red baize, looking not unlike a Punch-and-Judy show with the top taken off. But as the tall red rostrum suggested a comical, lank oasis left blooming alone in a desert of space, it was supported on each side by two dummy pulpits of similar construction. Once mounted into the middle box, nothing of Dickens was visible but his head and shoulders, which perhaps was fortunate, if we are to believe a tell-tale supernumerary, who declares that the great author's legs shook from the beginning to the end of the reading. For the first time in his life, Dickens was reduced to extremities. How little he had to fear ! His "uneducated audience" was composed of the gentry of the country round about ; and the vote of thanks which closed the proceedings was moved by the senior Marquis of Scotland, and seconded by the heir of the wealthiest peer in England.

The verdict of Peterborough received "confirmation strong" in Paris, where Dickens won his most enviable laurels from Polyglot audiences, half English and half French. Viardot-Garcia, sister of Malibran, and the greatest living lyric artist, journeyed from her home



in Baden to pay homage to a brother actor, whenever Dickens appeared in the French capital. He never had ■ finer criticism than this, and having had it can dispense with any other.

Having thus, by way of preface, crossed the Atlantic and wandered into the past, I return to Dickens in America.

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, — I am to have the pleasure of reading to you first, to-night, ‘A Christmas Carol’ in four staves. Stave One, Marley’s Ghost. Marley was dead to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge’s name was good upon ‘Change for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.”

At the close of this paragraph the critic beside me whispers, “Dickens’s voice is limited in power, husky, and naturally monotonous. If he succeeds in overcoming these defects, it will be by dramatic genius.” I begin to take a gloomy view of the situation, and wonder why Dickens constantly employs the rising inflection, and never comes to a full stop; but we are so pleasantly and naturally introduced to Scrooge that my spirits revive. “Foul weather did n’t know where to have him. The heaviest rain and snow and hail and sleet could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect, — they often ‘came down’ handsomely, and Scrooge *never did*.” Here

the magnetic current between reader and listener sets in, and when Scrooge's clerk "put on his white comforter and tried to warm himself at the candle,—in which effort, not being a man of strong imagination, he failed,"—the connection is tolerably well established. I see old Scrooge, very plainly, growling and snarling at his pleasant nephew, and when that nephew invites that uncle to eat a Christmas dinner with him, and Dickens says that Scrooge said "that he would see him—yes, I am very sorry to say he did,—he went the whole length of the expression, and said he would see him in that extremity, first,"—he makes one dive at our sense of humor and takes it captive. Dickens is Scrooge most decidedly,—just as we have seen him in the book. There are the old features, the pointed nose, the thin lips, the wiry chin, the frosty rime on head and eyebrows, and the shrewd, grating voice. He is the portly gentleman with the conciliatory voice on a mission of charity,—just the voice in which gentlemen-beggars deliver their errands of mercy; he is twice Scrooge when, the portly gentleman remarking that many poor people had rather die than go to the workhouse, he replies, "O, well, you know, upon the whole, if they'd rather die, they had better do it and decrease the surplus population"; and thrice Scrooge when, turning upon his clerk, he says, "You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?" It is the incarnation of a hard-hearted, hard-fisted, hard-voiced miser.

"If it's — if it's — quite convenient, sir." A few words, but they denote Bob Cratchit in three feet of comforter exclusive of fringe, in well-darned, threadbare clothes, with a mild, frightened, lisping voice, so thin that you can see through it!

Then there comes the change when Scrooge, upon going home, "saw in the knocker Marley's face!" Of course Scrooge saw it, because the expression of Dickens's face, as he rubs his eyes and stares, makes me see it, "with a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar." There is good acting in this scene, and there is fine acting when the dying flame leaps up as though it cried, "I know him! Marley's ghost!"

Scrooge bites his fingers nervously as he peers at the ghost, and then with infinite gusto Dickens reads that description of Marley, how, "looking through this waistcoat, Scrooge *could see the two buttons on his coat behind*"; how Scrooge grew wondrously perplexed as to whether his old partner could sit down after undergoing such atmospheric changes; how Scrooge would persist in doubting his senses because Marley might be "an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are"; and how Scrooge finally listens to Marley, yet, believing that business habits of despatch are quite as good for the next world as for this, exclaims with comic earnestness, "For Heaven's sake, don't be flowery, Jacob,

whatever you are!" It is excellent, and at the conclusion of Stave One, my friend, the critic, and I say, "Dickens is an actor."

Nothing can be better than the rendering of the Fezziwig party in Stave Two. You behold Scrooge gradually melting into humanity; Scrooge as a joyous apprentice; that model of employers, Fezziwig, with his comfortable, jovial voice; Mrs. Fezziwig, "one vast substantial smile"; and all the Fezziwigs. Dickens's expression, as he relates how "in came the housemaid with *her cousin the baker*, and in came the cook with *her brother's particular friend the milkman*," is delightfully comic, while his complete rendering of that dance where "all were top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them," is owing to the inimitable action of his hands. They actually perform upon the table, as if it were the floor of Fezziwig's room, and every finger were a leg belonging to one of the Fezziwig family. This *feat* is only surpassed by Dickens's illustration of Sir Roger de Coverley, as interpreted by Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig, when "a positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves," and he "cut so deftly that he appeared to wink with his legs!" It is a maze of humor. Before the close of the stave, Scrooge's horror at sight of the young girl once loved by him and put aside for gold, shows that Dickens's power is not purely comic.

Ah, but the best of all is Stave Three! I distinctly see that Cratchit family. There are the potatoes that

"knocked loudly at the saucepan lid to be let out and peeled"; there is Mrs. Cratchit, fluttering and cackling like a motherly hen with a young brood of chickens; and there is everybody. The way those two young Cratchits hail Martha, and exclaim, "*There 's such a goose, Martha!*" can never be forgotten. By some prestidigitation Dickens takes off his own head and puts on a Cratchit's; and when those two young gentlemen cry out, "*There 's father coming! Hide, Martha, hide!*" they not only clap their hands, but they seem to be dancing round Dickens's table. Then Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim come in, and Bob's thin voice pipes out, "*Hullo! I say; why, where 's our Martha?*" accompanying the question with a perfect presentment of humble, simple-hearted disappointment; while Mrs. Cratchit shakes her head importantly, and replies, "*Not coming!*" But murder will out; and then Bob relates "*how Tiny Tim*" behaved; "*as good as gold, and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember, upon Christmas day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.*" There is a volume of pathos in these words, which are the most delicate and artistic rendering of the whole reading.

Ah, that Christmas dinner! I feel as if I were eating



every morsel of it. Peter mashes the potatoes with incredible energy; Belinda sweetens the apple-sauce, and smacks her lips so loudly in the tasting as to prove that it could not be better; "the two young Cratchits," "cram spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn"; and Tiny Tim "beats on the table with the handle of his knife, as he feebly cries, 'Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!'" in such a still, small voice. Moreover, there is that goose! I see it with my naked eye. And O, the pudding! "A smell like ■ washing day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastry-cook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding!" Dickens's spiffing and smelling of that pudding would make a starving family believe that they had swallowed it, holly and all. It is infectious.

What Dickens *does* is frequently infinitely better than anything he says, or the way he says it; yet the doing is as delicate and intangible as the odor of violets, and can be no better indicated. Nothing of its kind can be more touchingly beautiful than the manner in which Bob Cratchit—previous to proposing "a merry Christmas to us all, my dears, God bless us"—stoops down, with tears in his eyes, and places Tiny Tim's withered little hand in his, "as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him." It is pantomime worthy of the finest actor.



Equally clever is Bob's attempt to pacify Mrs. Cratchit, when, upon being desired to toast "Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast," this amiable lady displays an amount of temper of which we never believed her capable. "My dear!" says Bob, in an expostulatory tone, "my dear! the children! Christmas day!" pointing mysteriously to each one with inimitable *naïveté*. Bob's picture ought to be taken at this moment. Indeed, now I think of it, I am astonished that artists who illustrate such of Dickens's books as are read by him do not make him their model. They can never approach his conception, they can never equal his execution, and to the virtue of truth would be added the charm of resembling the author.

Admirable is Mrs. Cratchit's ungracious drinking to Scrooge's health, and Martha's telling how she had seen a lord, and how he "was much about as tall as Peter!"

It is a charming cabinet picture, and so likewise is the glimpse of Christmas at Scrooge's nephew's. The plump sister is "satisfactory, O, perfectly satisfactory," and Topper is a magnificent fraud on the understanding, a side-splitting fraud. I see Fred get off the sofa and *stamp* at his own fun, and I hear the plump sister's voice when she guesses the wonderful riddle, "It's your uncle Sero-o-o-o-oge!" Altogether, Dickens is better than any comedy.

What a change in Stave Four! There sit the gray-



BOB CRATCHIT AND TINY TIM.



haired rascal, old Joe, with his crooning voice, Mrs. Dilber, and those robbers of dead men's shrouds.

There is something positively and Shakespearianly weird in the laugh and tone of the charwoman. "Let the charwoman alone to be the first," she cries. "Let the laundress alone to be the second; and let the undertaker's man alone to be the third. Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we have n't all three met here without meaning it!" Unconsciously the three witches of "Macbeth" arise before the imagination, which perceives by Dickens's treatment of this short but graphic scene how fine a sketch he would make did fate ever cast him for one of the sisters three.

One turn of the kaleidoscope and we stand before the body of the plundered unknown man; another, and there sit the Cratchits weeping over Tiny Tim's death, a scene that would be beyond all praise were Bob's cry, "My little, little child!" a shade less dramatic. Here, and only here, Dickens forgets the nature of Bob's voice, and employs all the power of his own, carried away apparently by the situation. Bob would not thus give vent to his feelings. Finally, there is Scrooge, no longer a miser, but a human being, screaming at the "conversational" boy, the "Itinerary of London," in Sunday clothes, to buy him the prize turkey "that never could have stood upon his legs, that bird. He would have snapped 'em off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax." There is Bob Cratchit behind time, trying "to

overtake nine o'clock" that fled fifteen minutes before ; there is Scrooge poking Bob in the ribs, and vowing he will raise his salary ; and there is at last happiness for all, as Tiny Tim exclaims, " God bless us, every one ! "

I do not see how " The Christmas Carol " can be read and acted better. The only improvement possible is in " The Ghosts," who are perhaps too monotonous, — ■ way ghosts have when they return to earth. It is generally believed that ghosts, being " damp, moist, uncomfortable bodies," lose their voices beyond redemption and are obliged to pipe through eternity on one key. I am at a loss to see the wisdom of this hypothesis. Solemnity and monotony are not synonymous terms, yet every theatrical ghost insists that they are, and Dickens is no exception to the rule. If monotony be excusable in any one, however, it is in him ; for when one actor is obliged to represent *twenty-three different characters*, giving to every one an individual tone, he may be pardoned if his ghosts are not colloquial.

Talk of sermons and churches ! There never was ■ more beautiful sermon than this of " The Christmas Carol." Sacred names do not necessarily mean sacred things.







LITTLE EM'LY.

## III.

## DAVID COPPERFIELD.

NOTHING is more unjust than severe criticism of an artist heard or seen but once. Dickens's first rendering of "David Copperfield" disappointed me sadly in the more serious portions, and had I been obliged to give an opinion then and there, I should have declared that his tragedy needed force, and that his description of the shipwreck at Yarmouth lacked vividness and intensity. Second and third hearings proved to me that Dickens depends upon the sympathy of his audiences for inspiration, and does not do himself full justice, unless warmly supported by them. This dependence is especially apparent in "David Copperfield," which is undoubtedly the most difficult and most exhausting of his five readings, — being the most dramatic. I write of the reader at his best.

Ordinarily, descriptions are "most tolerable and not to be endured." In novels the eye blinks at them, and rushes off in pursuit of dialogue. In hearing them read, the ear stops itself with imaginary cotton until the plot thickens and somebody says something to somebody else. But with Boz all signs fail. You cannot possibly overlook his descriptions if you would. He runs his pen through the heart of a fact so dexterously — after the

manner of naturalists — as to ■■■ it to lie before you in all its length, breadth, and local coloring, and you can no more ignore it than you can ignore sunshine. Attractive, then, as Dickens's descriptions are in reading, they become doubly so when read by him. Without being ■ orator, possessing (as has been previously stated) ■ naturally monotonous voice, he, by the keen appreciation of his own meaning and by a most original emphasis, develops every possibility of his text, and what was previously latent stands out in bold relief. It did not take me long to discover that "Dickens," however familiar, becomes ■ revelation when interpreted by the author.

Thus when Dickens begins his reading of "David Copperfield" with the description of the interior of Mr. Peggotty's boat-house, I realize that I have never before had a good look at the walls whereon "were colored pictures of Abraham in red going to sacrifice Isaac in blue, and of Daniel in yellow being cast into a den of green lions." I never clearly saw Mrs. Gummidge until I looked into *his* face, and heard *her* declare that she was "a lone, lorn creetur, and everythink went contrairy with her." It is the look and querulous voice of the good old grumbling soul. Soon we are in the presence of generous, genial Mr. Peggotty, who grows quite red in the face with delight at shaking hands with Copperfield and Steerforth, and chucks little Em'ly under his arm just as if she were there *to* be chucked. In his broad, hearty, tarpaulin voice, he joyfully and simply tells of

Ham's courtship; concluding with those mighty blows upon Ham's imaginary shoulders that make us wonder how Dickens can poke the air ■ naturally as to make us believe it to be Ham. Yet surely this is Ham, bashful, rubbing his hands with emotion, and, with a tear in his voice, saying, "I'd lay down my life for her, Mas'r Davy,—O, most content and cheerful. There ain't ■ gentl'man in all the land, nor yet a sailing upon all the sea, that can love his lady more than I love her, though there 's many a common man as could say better what he meant." Childlike, noble-hearted Ham!—childlike saving in the kiss Dickens wafts after Em'ly, wherein there is more of the *salon* than of the boat-house.

"Mr. Peggotty," says Steerforth, "you are a thoroughly good fellow and deserve to be as happy as you are to-night, my hand upon it. Ham, I give you joy, my boy. My hand upon that, too!" Dickens's change of intonation and expression in addressing the father and ~~son is striking~~, but I am inclined to think *too* striking, for had Steerforth exhibited the hatred of Ham that darkens Dickens's face, it could not have passed unnoticed. It is a hatred admirably suited to Steerforth when later he calls Ham "a chuckle-headed fellow" and vehemently rails at himself "in that devil's bark of a boat," but not before. Ah, Steerforth, other actors may interpret *you* better, but I doubt whether any one can equal the solemn yet tender sorrow with which Dickens, as Copperfield, exclaims, "O God forgive you,

Steerforth, to touch that passive hand in love and friendship, never, never more!" It is a sigh from a heavy, heavy heart.

First, in Chapter Second, is that second glimpse of fretful Mrs. Gummidge, who is as complete a character as if she were a whole play, and then Dickens again becomes old Mr. Peggotty. There never was more roughshod *naïveté* than his when he calls himself a "babby in regard o' Em'ly; not to look at, but to — to consider on, you know," and thinks his beautiful love for his little niece must be "along of my havin' played with Em'ly so much when she was a child, and havin' made believe as we was lions, and whales, and sharks, and French, and Turks, and porpuses, and *every variety of forriners*." We could listen to the simple prattle of this overflowing heart all the evening; but alas! the pleasant comedy must give way to drama. Quickly the scene changes. Here is Ham, with horror-stricken face, whispering that "Em'ly's run away"; here is Copperfield reading in a plaintive voice Em'ly's touching letter to her old lover. Dazed and stunned, the loved and loving uncle asks, in a gruff voice, "Who's the man? I want to know his name." Poor Ham! "It is your friend Steerforth," he says to Copperfield with concentrated emotion, "and he's a damned villain!" Is this caged lion thirsting for vengeance upon Em'ly's seducer the genial soul of a minute ago? I see Mr. Peggotty pull down his great-coat from its peg in the corner and struggle to put it on.

■ he cries out, "Bear ■ hand with this! I'm struck of a heap, and can't do it"; and as his mind wanders in the agonized refrain, "I'm going fur to seek my niece. I'm going fur to seek my Em'ly. No one stop me! I'm going to seek her fur and wide!" . Who could have believed that in fretful Mrs. Gummidge Mr. Peggotty had cherished unawares an angel of peace that would bring comfort to his bruised soul in its hour of trial? Yet it is even so, and here she stands, her trembling hands affectionately stroking Dan'l, her querulous voice softened, reproaching herself for ever having been a "worrit," and gradually soothing the old man to tears.

How Dickens can pass from grave to gay without a moment's pause is a problem difficult to solve. He does, however; and while eyes are still dimmed by the sad scene in the boat-house, we find ourselves laughing heartily at David Copperfield in his "top set of chambers in Buckingham Street Strand," where he "lived principally on Dora and coffee," and at which ecstatic era of his existence he "laid the foundation of all the corns he ever had." "If the boots at that period," declares Copperfield, in a tone that is Dickens's own, and nobody's else, "could only be produced and compared with the natural size of my feet, they would show in ■ most affecting manner what the state of my heart was." More ridiculous still is Mrs. Crupp, the housekeeper, whose voice and facial expression are as good farce acting as humanity deserves. If her manner of asking for "a little tincture



of cardamums, mixed with rhubarb, and flavored with seven drops of the essence of cloves; or, if he had not such a thing by him, *with ■ little brandy*," could be impossibly caught, transfixed, and perpetuated forever, so that everybody might have it in the house and take it whenever a depressed state of the market or of individual finances required, it would harden many a softening brain and materially decrease the number of suicides. Mrs. Dickens Crupp, or Mrs. Crupp Dickens, whichever she may be, is a fascinating woman. "What makes you suppose there is any young lady in the case, Mrs. Crupp?" asks Copperfield.

It is worth a day's imprisonment, with Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy as an article of diet, to hear Mrs. Crupp's reply:—

"Mr. Copperfull, I'm a mother myself. Your boots and your waist is equally too small, and you don't eat enough, sir, nor yet drink. Sir, I have laundressed other young gentlemen besides you. It was but the gentleman who died here before yourself that fell in love,—with a bar-maid,—and had his waistcoats took in directly, though much swelled by drinking. Keep a good heart, sir, *and know your value*. If you was to take to something, sir,—if you was to take to nine-pins now, which is a wery healthy game,—you might find it divert your mind and do you good."

Well, Mrs. Crupp no sooner makes her exit than Copperfield greets his friends, the Micawbers, and Trad-

dies. Traddles says but three words, "Not at all," during the entire visit; nevertheless, three words are quite enough for Dickens to make a man out of, and Traddles is no myth, but a confiding human being, with a propensity to eat his own fingers. Traddles is "not at all," and "not at all" is Traddles.

In Micawber, Dickens undergoes as much of a transformation as if he enjoyed a patent-right to the necromancer's "Presto, change." I see him "swelling visibly before my wery eyes," as he tips backward and forward, first on his heels and then on his toes. Before he stops swelling, he becomes just about the size of our ideal Micawber; his face, quite apoplectic in hue, is fenced in by a wall of shirt-collar; he twirls his eye-glass with peculiar grace; and when he exclaims, "My dear Copperfield, this is *lux-u-rious*; this is a way of life which reminds me of the period when I was myself in a state of celibacy," — nearly choking himself to death before he arrives at "a state of celibacy," — the picture is complete. It is Micawber in "one of those momentous stages in the life of man," when he has "fallen back *for* a spring," and, previous to "a vigorous leap," is quite ready to fortify himself and the dearest partner of his greatness with a bachelor dinner and punch. Micawber's waiting for things to "turn up"; his eloquent tribute to "the influence of Woman in the lofty character of Wife"; his magnificent trifling with the word "*Discount*"; and the all-pervading cough, as inseparable from his speech as oxygen from air, are delectable.

Dickens could no ~~more~~ be Micawber without that cough than Micawber could have ever been at all without Dickens. It is the salt that gives the character savor. None but a great man misunderstood ever had such a propensity to choke. And when Mr. Micawber *does* cough, the two lapels of hair brushed above Dickens's ears, appear to be drawn by capillary attraction towards the sentiments spoken, and, waxing rampant, nod approvingly, as if to say, "Just so." Neither cough nor lapels are to be found in the text, but when did finite words ever express a man's soul?

Mr. Micawber is so great a man as to render it impossible for Mrs. Micawber to be a greater. Nevertheless, she is. Those lapels subside, and Mrs. Micawber sits before you, sipping her punch, smoothing her hair, "comparatively *lovely*," as Copperfield observes, and blandly discusses Mr. Micawber's prospects. To describe the indescribable is absurd; yet it must not go unrecorded that Mrs. Micawber's sublimest moment is reached when she heroically remarks, "That, at least, is *my* view, my dear Mr. Copperfield and Mr. Traddles, of the obligation which I took upon myself when I repeated the irrevocable words, 'I, Emma, take thee, Wilkins.' I read the service over with a bedroom candle, on the previous night, and the conclusion I derived from it was, that I never could or would desert Mr. Micawber." As she utters these words, Mrs. Micawber is not to be trifled with. There is a determination in her eye that is

equal to any amount of opposition ; yet, if possible, her courage takes still another flight, and her mien becomes still more majestic in her final answer to her final argument : “ And here is Mr. Micawber without any suitable position or employment. Where does that responsibility rest ? Clearly on society. Then I would make a fact so disgraceful known, and boldly challenge society to set it right. It appears to me, my dear Mr. Copperfield, that what Mr. Micawber has to do is to throw down the gauntlet to society, and say, in effect, ‘ Show me who will take that up. Let the party immediately step forward.’ ” Why the party does *not* immediately step forward, the party alone can explain, for Mrs. Micawber has her eye on him, and looks as if the secrets of *his* prison-house were no secrets at all to *her*, and that the perennial employment of Mr. Micawber, on remunerative terms, would be but slight compensation for her discreet silence.

Then the account of that dinner ! Language is usually thrown away upon readers ; it is snubbed unmercifully, as if every word wore the same hue instead of being possessed of a peculiar coloring, which is shaded, however, according to situation. Dickens is an artist, and therefore never takes language in vain. He embraces every opportunity ; hence, when he tells us that “ the pigeon-pie was not bad, but it was a *delusive* pie, the crust being like a disappointed phrenological head, — full of lumps and bumps, with nothing particular under-

neath!" that adjective "delusive" prepares us for all the good things to come. It takes aim and fires at the pie, bringing down pigeons, crust, and all.

The pie no sooner disappears than merriment ceases, and Mr. Peggotty in all his noble simplicity relates Copperfield how he went through France "fur to seek his niece." "And many a woman, Mas'r Davy, as has had a daughter about Em'ly's age, I've found a-waiting for me, at our Saviour's cross outside the village, fur to do me sim'lar kindnesses. Some has had daughters as was dead. And God only knows how good them mothers was to me!" Tears? yes, tears are in the old sailor's eyes, and he is not the only one who brushes them away. "I never doubted her. No! not a bit! On'y let her see my face,—on'y let her heer my voice,—on'y let my stanning afore her bring to her thoughts of the home she fled away from, and the child she had been,—and if she had growed to be a royal lady, she'd have fell down at my feet!" What a lesson of love and charity is taught in these few solemn words and that expressive gesture of the arm! "All that troubles me is, to think that any harm might come to me afore this money was give back. If I was to die, and it was lost or stole, or elseways made away with, and it was never know'd by him but what I'd accepted of it, I believe the t' other world would n't hold me! I believe I must come back!" Grand old Mr. Peggotty! (for it is he, not Dickens, that speaks,) well may everything be hushed in reverence



as he steps out into the rigorous night, for there is harbored within his breast an angel of the Lord.

The snow has suddenly ceased to fall, and all is again sunshine. Copperfield is steeped in Dora, and romantically calling on the night to shield his Dora "from mice, to which she had a great objection." There are not many more delightful comedies than this short scene at Miss Mills's. On the stage Miss Mills would be ■ silly supernumerary, in a doubtful white muslin dress, with no more idea of the importance of her one little remark than a dejected canary-bird has of the importance of specie payment. But the art with which Dickens rescues the most trifling character from obscurity is positively marvellous. When Miss Mills is "very sorry her *papa* is not at home," that young lady proves herself to be an admirable actress. The love-making between Dora and Copperfield is perfect; perfect also is the little dog Jip, though he does nothing but bark. When Copperfield asks Dora if she can love a *beggar*, and she begins to cry and "take on" and wants to go to Julia Mills, and Copperfield ravages a work-box for a smelling-bottle, and applies an ivory needle-case instead, and drops all the needles over Dora; and when at last the pretty doll is soothed and her lover asks, "Is your heart mine still, dear Dora?"

"O yes! O yes! it's all yours. Only don't be dreadful! Don't talk about beggars!"

"My dearest love, the crust well earned —"



"O yes; but I don't want to hear any more about crusts. And after we are married *Jip must have a mutton-chop every day at twelve, or he'll die!*" — Dickens is so funny as to make any one who loves humor as tenaciously as most people love their lives, feel deeply indebted to him.

"O, because I am such a little goose, and she *knows* I am!" *she* being Mary Anne, the servant who had "a cousin in the Life Guards, with such long legs that he looked *like the afternoon shadow of somebody else!*" Well, into that short sentence, with its accompanying expression, Dickens condenses the whole of Copperfield's Child-wife; yet not the whole, for the pretty little creature has a heart full of love for her husband, and signs her own death-warrant as she says, with plaintive sentiment, "When you miss what you would like me to be, and what I think I never can be, say 'Still my foolish child-wife loves me'; for indeed I do."

But the childlike prattle is soon forgotten in the storm raging at Yarmouth on that terrible September night; in the appearance off the coast next morning of a shipwrecked schooner from Spain or Portugal; in the mad frenzy of the sea; in the daring of the solitary man who wears a singular red cap, that he waves while clinging to the mast, and who was *the once* dear friend, — ~~Stor~~ *Stor*forth; in the sublime courage of Ham, who "watched the sea until there was a great retiring wave, when he dashed in after it. . . . At length he neared the wreck. He was so near that with one more of his vigorous strokes he

would be clinging to it, when ■ high, green, vast hillside of water moving on shoreward from beyond the ship, he seemed to leap up into it *with a mighty bound, and the ship was gone!*”

With the going down of that ship, — with the solemn, significant nod of the fisherman who leads Copperfield to the shore where Steerforth lies “with his head upon his arm, as he had often lain at school,” — all doubt as to Dickens’s tragic power is at an end. Thrilling as this fine description is in reading, it becomes still more so when recited by the author; yet it is no ill compliment to him to say that it is capable of even greater effect. The scene admits of wonderful scope for a mighty voice and mighty action.

Take it for all in all; David Copperfield is an extraordinary performance. On the stage, fine actors might render Steerforth and Copperfield better, and might do as much justice to Mr. Peggotty and Ham. A fine actress might throw more pathos into Emily’s letter; but Mrs. Crupp, Mr. and Mrs. Micawber, Traddles, Dora, and Julia Mills are incomparable, and no one actor living can embody the twelve characters of this reading with the individuality given them by Dickens, unaided, too, as he is, by theatrical illusion. Few realize what a triumph of art it is to overcome the depressing influence of the lecture-room.

## IV.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY AT THE YORKSHIRE  
SCHOOL.

NO English novelist, living or dead, has created as many dramatic pictures as Dickens, therefore it is not surprising that a large majority of his novels should have been adapted to the stage. Born an actor, Dickens regards everything from a dramatic stand-point. Even in reading you see his characters talk. So natural is his dialogue, that whole scenes may be taken from his books for private theatricals, without any adaptation whatever. They will play themselves, provided the amateurs are endowed with ordinary intelligence, and it is whispered in Gath that private theatricals are the severest test to which any literary work can be put. This power is peculiarly Dickensian, and certainly other novelists could not publicly interpret their own works with similar effect. They may read skilfully from the poets, or they may gracefully deliver lectures, as Thackeray once did, but their novels are constructed on entirely different principles, and cannot possibly be set before an audience after the manner of Dickens. It is in the genius of Dickens to hold the mirror up to nature on the stage.

That wonderfully knowing person, Monsieur On Dit,

who is perpetually "cooling his eyes" and ears at other people's key-holes, most positively declares that Dickens seriously objects to the dramatization of his novels; but ■ Dickens is held responsible for many opinions that never entered into his most fantastic dreams, it is quite safe to conclude that he makes no such wholesale opposition. For an author to protest against very bad adaptations very badly acted, is natural; but a clever dramatization cleverly delineated is far more likely to please than displease him. Dickens's real opinion is probably better defined in that chapter of "Nicholas Nickleby" descriptive of the supper given to Manager Crummles prior to his departure for America, at which a very significant conversation ensues between Nicholas and a literary gentleman who had dramatized two hundred and forty-seven novels as fast as they had come out, — some of them faster than they had come out, — and *was* a literary gentleman in consequence.

"Did you ever hear a definition of fame, sir?" asks the literary gentleman. . . . "When I dramatize ■ book, sir, *that's* fame — for its author."

"So Richard Turpin, Tom King, and Jerry Abershaw have handed down to fame the names of those on whom they committed their most impudent robberies?" said Nicholas.

"I don't know anything about that, sir," answered the literary gentleman.

"Shakespeare dramatized stories which had previously appeared in print, it is true," observed Nicholas.

“ ‘Meaning Bill, sir?’ said the literary gentleman. ‘So he did. Bill was an adapter, certainly, so he was — and very well he adapted too — considering.’

“ ‘I was about to say,’ rejoined Nicholas, ‘that Shakespeare derived some of his plots from old tales and legends in general circulation; but it seems to me that some of the gentlemen of your craft at the present day have shot very far beyond him —’

“ ‘You’re quite right, sir,’ interrupted the literary gentleman, leaning back in his chair and exercising his tooth-pick. ‘Human intellect, sir, has progressed since his time — is progressing — will progress —’

“ ‘Shot beyond him, I mean,’ resumed Nicholas, ‘in quite another respect, for, whereas he brought within the magic circle of his genius traditions peculiarly adapted to his purpose, and turned familiar things into constellations which should enlighten the world for ages, you drag within the magic circle of your dulness subjects not at all adapted to the purposes of the stage, and debase as he exalted. For instance, you take the uncompleted works of living authors, fresh from their hands, wet from the press, cut, hack, and carve them to the powers and capacities of your actors, and the capability of your theatres, finish unfinished works, hastily and crudely vamp up ideas not yet worked out by their original projector, but which have doubtless cost him many thoughtful days and sleepless nights; by a comparison of incidents and dialogue, down to the very last







NICHOLAS AND SMIKE.

word he may have written a fortnight before, do your utmost to anticipate his plot; all this without his permission, and against his will; and then, to crown the whole proceeding, publish in some mean pamphlet, ■ unmeaning farrago of garbled extracts from his work, to which you put your name as author, with the honorable distinction annexed, of having perpetrated a hundred other outrages of the same description. Now, show me the distinction between such pilfering as this and picking ■ man's pocket in the street; unless, indeed, it be that the legislature has a regard for pocket-handkerchiefs, and leaves men's brains, except when they are knocked out by violence, to take care of themselves.'

"'Men must live, sir,' said the literary gentleman, shrugging his shoulders.

"'That would be an equally fair plea in both cases,' replied Nicholas; 'but, if you put it upon that ground, I have nothing more to say than that if I were a writer of books, and you a thirsty dramatist, I would rather pay your tavern-score for six months — large as it might be — than have a niche in the Temple of Fame, with you for the humblest corner of my pedestal, through six hundred generations.'" In this stinging retort, Nicholas Nickleby is evidently the mouthpiece of his author, who has been subjected to similar treatment, without any power of redress. It is hardly possible to conceive of more flagrant injustice, yet Dickens is as much ■ victim to this species of robbery as he was thirty years ago.

Many critics are opposed to the dramatization of any novel whatsoever, on the ground that no play can give the original work entire, and that at best it must be a sketch with much left to the imagination. As a rule, this opposition is wise, because, as a rule, novels are unfit to be trusted outside of their covers. Dickens is an exception; and any one who remembers Burton's "Captain Cuttle," the late J. M. Field's "Mantilini," Mrs. Field's "Smike," Charlotte Cushman's "Nancy Sykes," E. L. Davenport's "Bill Sykes," and James W. Wallack's "Fagin," will never cease to congratulate himself upon seeing Dickens embodied. To condemn a sketch, is to be ignorant of the fact that an artist frequently puts more inspiration into it than into more lengthy and elaborate work, for the reason that the colors can be laid on in a moment of enthusiasm. The sketch of a master is a daring concentration of his genius. Putting Dickens on the stage finely, is stamping every character indelibly upon the mind. It is quite possible to forget what we read, but it is impossible to forget a fine picture that *talks* as well as *looks*. The terrible lesson of "Oliver Twist" is not fully learned until taught by the actor. If we object to Sketches from Boz in the theatre, we must, to be logical, object to Sketches *from* Boz *by* Boz in the lecture-room. What lover of Dickens is prepared to do this? And who will forego the delight of supping upon delicious tidbits because he cannot have put before him the entire joint off which these tidbits have been cut?

Of all the Dickens dramatizations, that of "Nicholas Nickleby" is, perhaps, most familiar to the public. In spite of this fact, Dickens more fully fills out the picture than we can ever expect to see it filled on the stage. Small parts, however important to the *ensemble*, are invariably delegated to incompetent actors, and theatrical children are the dreariest of all spectacles.

Dickens's Squeers is a complete embodiment. From beginning to end he is the brutal, cunning, diabolically funny beast the author's fancy paints him, and it is complimentary to Dickens's versatility of facial expression to say that with his one eye, with the blank side of his face much puckered up, and with the corners of his mouth drawn the wrong way, he looks the monster he depicts.

"This is twopenn' 'orth of milk, is it, waiter?" The mug is *not* on that desk, but it seems to be, as Mr. Squeers looks into it and gives his order. "What a rare article milk is, to be sure, in London! Just fill that mug up with lukewarm water, William, will you?"

Then both eyes are wide open, the sinister appearance vanishes, and there stands the waiter, William, asking if it must be filled, "To the wery top, sir? Why, the milk will be drowned?"

"Serve it right for being so dear"; and back comes Squeers in a jiffy. His stirring of that milk and water, exclaiming the while, "Here's richness," and his talking to those hungry little boys looking on with hungry eyes, about conquering their passions and not being eager after

"vittles," must rejoice the soul of the devil, if that distinguished individual has such an unnecessary appendage. There is an "atmosphere" about Dickens's Squeers which impresses us with the belief that he enjoys being a brute and is not an actor trying to be brutal. Mrs. Squeers, too, — she who thanked God for not being a grammarian, — is quite as well individualized as her more important husband. The short dialogues between Squeers and herself are quite entertaining, — after their peculiar fashion, — the climax being attained when, with an eye to Nickleby's accommodation, Squeers asks, "Who sleeps in Brooks's bed, my dear?" "In Brooks's bed?" replies Mrs. Squeers, in her most winning manner; "well, there's Jennings, — there's little Bolder, — there's Gray-marsh, — and there's What's-his-name." Mrs. Squeers makes each syllable an independent name, so that our mind's eye contemplates *ten* boys in Brooks's bed.

"So there is. Yes! Brooks's is full"; and Squeers out-Squeers himself when, turning to poor Nickleby, he asks, "Do you wash?" "Occasionally," replies the astonished young A. M.

"Umph! I don't know what towel to put you on. I know there's a place on somebody's towel; but if you'll make shift with your pocket-handkerchief to-morrow morning, Mrs. Squeers will arrange that in the course of the day."

Search through every edition of Dickens known to the public, — their name is legion, — and you will not find

that inquiry about washing, nor Nickleby's reply, nor that place in the towel, nor that pocket-handkerchief, nor in fact many of the cleverest "points" made by Dickens, which interpolations flash upon us as unexpectedly as comets, and give some good people much concern because they are not down in the book! These comets dash about most wildly in the first school-room scene, where, in reviewing the first class, Squeers is in his element. "W-i-n, win, w-e-r, der, winder, *preposition*, a casement. . . . B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, *adjective*, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That 's our system, Nickleby. It 's exactly like the use of the globes."

"Third boy, what is a horse?"

"A beast, sir!" (Poor little boy, what a frightened little voice it is!)

"So it is, ain't it, Nickleby?"

"I believe there is no doubt of that, sir."

"Of course there ain't. A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped 's Latin, or Greek, or Hebrew, or some other language that 's dead and *déserves to be*, for beast." Nobody who has not heard Dickens's Squeers make this profound explanation knows *how* satirical and funny it is.

Squeers's reading of the boys' letters is good enough to make us wish those letters would never finish. When "Graymarsh's maternal aunt" thinks Mrs. Squeers "must be a *hangel*," and when Mr. Squeers, in acknowledging the



eulogy upon himself, sagely observes that "*a good man struggling with destiny is—a spectacle for things in general,*" fiendish humor runs riot, yet does not attain its climax until the delivery of the Christian communication from "*Mobbs's mother-in-law.*" "*Mobbs's mother-in-law* took to bed on hearing that he would n't eat fat and *has had a succession of cold and biling water alternately running down her back ever since.* She wishes to know, by an early post, where he expects to go to, if he quarrels with his vittles; and with what feelings he *could* turn up his nose at the cow's-liver broth, after his good master had asked a blessing on it. This was told her in the London newspapers,—not by Mr. Squeers, for he is too kind and too good to set anybody against anybody. *Mobbs's mother-in-law* is sorry to find Mobbs is discontented, which is sinful and horrid, and hopes Mr. Squeers will flog him into a happier state of mind. With this view she has also stopped his halfpenny a week pocket-money, and given a double-bladed knife with a corkscrew in it, which she had brought on purpose for him, to the missionaries. A sulky state of feeling won't do. Cheerfulness and contentment must be kept up. Mobbs, come to me!" What varnish is to an oil-painting, Dickens's delivery is to this letter, wherein satire and humor share equal honors; and if in Squeers's first interviews with Nickleby, Dickens had introduced the following speech wherein the proprietor of Dotheboys Hall attains ■ more characteristic latitude than on any other occasion, he would have drawn, if not

a full-length, at least ■ three-quarters portrait of his devilish hero.

“ ‘ Measles, rheumatics, whooping-cough, fevers, agues, and lumbagers,’ said Mr. Squeers, ‘ is all philosophy together, that’s what it is. The heavenly bodies is philosophy, and the earthly bodies is philosophy. If there’s ■ screw loose in ■ heavenly body, that’s philosophy, and if there’s a screw loose in ■ earthly body, that’s philosophy too; or it may be that sometimes there’s ■ little metaphysics in it, but that’s not often. Philosophy’s the chap for me. If ■ parent asks ■ question in the classical, commercial, or mathematical line, says I, gravely, Why, sir, in the first place, are you a philosopher? — No, Mr. Squeers, he says, I ain’t. Then, sir, says I, I am sorry for you, for I sha’ n’t be able to explain it. Naturally the parent goes away and wishes he was a philosopher, and, equally naturally, thinks I’m one.”

The remaining scenes of Mr. and Mrs. Squeers are portrayed as well ■ they can be. Tomkins, who, upon hearing the missing Smike inquired for by his watchful master, makes his entrance and his exit in the shrill answer, “ Please, sir, I think Smike’s run away, sir,” is quite as much of ■ little boy as ever lived and talked incessantly; and the school-room *mélée* between Nickleby and Squeers is vividly and vigorously related.

There are invariably three degrees of excellence. In “ Nicholas Nickleby ” Dickens is not his best until the appearance of Fanny Squeers, Tilda Price, and John

Browdie. Very comical is the interview between Fanny Squeers and Nickleby. By means of *leger-de-figure* Dickens portrays Nickleby on one side of his face, and the susceptible Fanny on the other, for that simper, lisp, and mien certainly belong to Mr. Squeers's offspring. Her "*thank you*" is perfect, and her reply to Nickleby's question, "Shall it be a hard or soft nib?"—referring to the pen which is her excuse for appearing before the young master of arts,—"*As soft as possible, if you please,*" deserves to be perpetuated by a John Leech; although, now I think of it, could only one moment of this dialogue be made enduring, I should fasten my affections upon that wherein, walking away with the pen, she exclaims, in a Squeersian ecstasy, "*I never saw such legs in the whole course of my life!*"—"the general run of legs at Dotheboys Hall being crooked.")

But there are more plums in the memorable tea-party: Fanny's introduction of Nickleby to Matilda Price—"Mr. Nickleby, 'Tilda; 'Tilda, Mr. Nickleby"—is a fitting overture to one of the cleverest of *petite* comedies. John Browdie, with his rich Yorkshire dialect and voluminous laughter, is absolutely equal to an epidemic. He breaks out in every direction, and when the interest increases by the appearance of the green-eyed monster, which in Fanny Squeers assumes the spiteful, and in the Yorkshireman displays itself in flattening his nose with his clenched fist, it increases after the spectator's own heart. Then when John Browdie "dangs his boans

and boddy," and Miss Squeers makes a face at "Tilda (no child, however cultivated in the art, *can* "make a face" superior to Dickens), and the two bosom friends call each other names, winding up with that beautiful climax, "'Tilda, artful and designing 'Tilda! — I would n't have a child named 'Tilda, — not to save it from its grave," — the Tragic Muse herself would be reprehensible did she refrain from smiling, and even laugh outright at John Browdie's retort, "as to the matther o' thot, it 'll be time encaf to think aboot meaming of it when it cooms." Glorious John Browdie! there's not a trace of Dickens in him. Yorkshire triumphs over the dress-coat even, and the scene closes while we, like Oliver, long for "more." How Dickens ne'er o'ersteps the modesty of nature is particularly apparent in this speech of Browdie. Few are the actors who would not transcend the bounds of propriety, but Dickens is never more a gentleman than in dealing with passages that are capable of being vulgarly construed. His humor, though always in character, is never tinged with coarseness of manner.

At the conclusion of this admirable reading, impartial criticism declares that, of the eight characters portrayed, Fanny Squeers, "Tilda Price, and John Browdie are unapproachable; that Mr. and Mrs. Squeers could be equally well done by actors born for the purpose; that Nicholas Nickleby *might* be better done on the stage, but never *is*; and that Smike is the only character wherein Dickens fails. To demand of Dickens that he shall equal the

finest Smike of the stage is asking too much. Dickens is human, not superhuman. Let it be remembered also that the word "failure" is used with reservation. Dickens has set a very difficult task for himself, and one to which nobody else is equal. Compared with his other characters, Dickens's Smike is unsuccessful because it is vulnerable. Smike is not poorly done, but it ~~can~~ be better done. Dickens's Smike is earnest, pathetic, and his sighing is as truly touching as it is artistically fine. But Smike is not pathetic *enough*, and his monotonous voice frequently degenerates into a whine. This voice undoubtedly arises from Dickens's desire to give Smike a distinct individuality, and to prevent the intonation of one character from encroaching upon that of another. This individuality he most certainly preserves. There is not a trace of the Squeerses, or of Nickleby, or of Browdie in it, but the monotonous intonation is unnatural, and therefore unworthy of Dickens, whose best manner is thorough naturalness. Dickens could give more variety of tone and still keep Smike intact, and had he but this one character to assume, it would undoubtedly be vastly better carried out. At the same time it must be confessed that the finest Smike known thus far could not embody the seven remaining *dramatis personæ*, whose idiosyncrasies Dickens puts on as easily as he would put on old gloves. It is this versatility that almost silences criticism; yet loyalty to art demands the noting of spots upon the sun.





DOMBEY AND SON.





## V.

## THE STORY OF LITTLE DOMBEY.

“CHARLES DICKENS is only a caricaturist.” And he wrote the story of “Richard Doubledick, the poor soldier,” which, for naturalness and pathos, is unrivalled in the English language. “Charles Dickens is only a humorist.” And one half of his creations is as tragic as the other half is comic. “Charles Dickens is only a farce actor.” And the tears are still fresh that fell in listening to “The Story of Little Dombey.” Ah, well! whoever escapes being misinterpreted, likewise escapes being head and shoulders above his fellows. Who wears a crown at all must wear a crown of thorns.

Dickens's Reading of Little Dombey is peculiar; for while the tragic element enters largely into several other Readings, still laughter holds the balance of power. Every chapter of Little Dombey, on the contrary, is written in a minor key. Here and there *scherzos* are interspersed; but the voice of the “old, old-fashioned child” returns like a sad refrain, and the general effect is melancholy. It is the only one of Dickens's Readings that contains a death-bed scene. The Angel of Death hovers over “David Copperfield,” but we do not see Ham Peggotty and Steerforth die. The ocean yields up its victims and

lays their bodies upon the shore at our feet. There is solemnity without pathos. But the spirit of Little Dombey takes wing before our eyes, and in its flight touches heart-strings that respond with saddest music. Therefore "The Story of Little Dombey" is the least popular of all Dickens's Readings. He, the comedian, the farce-actor, succeeds in making people very miserable; and people dislike to be made miserable. They prefer to laugh. They object to any draft upon their sympathies. Put tragedy before them in such guise as to excite no emotion, and they enjoy it. Make them *feel* it, and it ceases to be an amusement. "I don't like Ristori's 'Marie Antoinette,'" said an unknown voice, behind me, not long ago. "I don't call that acting; it is real. If she did n't make me cry, I'd enjoy it. I tell you, that's not what I call art." In the most popular of all dictionaries art is defined thus: "ART, *n.*, The reverse of nature."

We are first ushered into the presence of "rich Mr. Dombey," who "sat in the corner of his wife's darkened bedchamber, in the great arm-chair by the bedside," and of "rich Mr. Dombey's son," who "lay tucked up warm in a little basket, carefully placed on a low settee in front of the fire and close to it, as if his constitution were analogous to that of a muffin, and it was essential to toast him brown while he was very new." In the reading of one sentence Dickens places before us both father and son. "Mr. Dombey was *rather* bald, *rather* red, and *rather* stern

and pompous. Mr. Dombey's son was *very* bald, and *very* red, and rather *crushed* and *spotty* in his general effect, — as yet." With Dickens, one or two adjectives answer the purpose of a whole paint-box.

"He will be christened Paul, of course. His father's name, Mrs. Dombey, and his grandfather's. I wish his grandfather were alive this day.' And again he said, 'Dombey and Son.'" After this Mr. Dombey, Sr., takes positive form and substance. Mr. Micawber is pompous, Dr. Blimber is pompous; but the pomposity of this rich gentleman, in a blue coat and bright buttons, is as unlike other styles of pomposity as *Anno Domini* is unlike *Anno Dombei*. Mr. Dombey is so pleased with himself — and his firm — that he is absolutely genial — for him; so much so as to acknowledge the presence of that other child, six years old, saying, "Florence, you may go and look at your pretty brother, if you like. — *Don't touch him!*" "How is it possible," asks Scudo, "to transmit to posterity, through the medium of cold language, an inflection of voice, a look, a gesture, a pause, those thousand shades of art and beauty that characterize the style of a great virtuoso?" I think of this, and nothing but this, when Dickens pauses and sums up "rich Mr. Dombey and Son" in a motion of the hands and that one short command, "*Don't touch him!*" Did he crush Florence beneath his heel, her insignificance could not be made more apparent.

*She* is not a Dombey. Mrs. Chick is, and when the

sister of her brother flings her arms about that brother's neck, exclaiming, "My dear Paul! This last child is quite ■ Dombey! He's such ■ perfect Dombey!" Dickens assumes the air of that lady whose immortal receipt will be incorporated in the world's proverbial philosophy as the grand moral panacea. How like a Dombey she is, in her exhortation there in the chamber of death; how she advises Fanny "to make an effort"; how she places her ear close to the mother's face in expectation of ■ reply; how she touches her, and almost shakes her, in order that Mrs. Dombey may be roused "to make an effort"! It is very real, this monologue of Mrs. Chick's, but no more real than Florence's appealing cry, "Mamma! O dear mamma! O dear mamma!" — no more real than the silence of that departing spirit,— no better than the closing of this scene. "The doctor gently brushed the scattered ringlets of the child aside from the face and mouth of the mother. And thus, clinging fast to the frail spar within her arms, the mother drifted out upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world." The reading is worthy of the writing.

In scene second the "odd child" is no longer ■ crushed and spotty in general effect," but sits in ■ little chair beside his father and talks, and it seems to me that Dickens is particularly happy — if such an adjective can be applied to so unhappy ■ subject — in the voice of Little Dombey. It is almost the same voice employed by him in Smeke; but what is objectionable in

the latter appears to be eminently characteristic of the former. Smike is ■ youth of nineteen, and may possess variety of intonation; whereas a treble monotone harmonizes with Paul's years. Dickens's management of this voice, too, completely expresses physical exhaustion and premature decay; it is far removed from anything *grown up* or manly, and, having once heard his Little Dombey, it is difficult to conceive how else the child could be successfully treated. The dialogue between Dombey and Son about money is a wonderful contrast of two natures, considering that the two natures are delineated by one man, and when Paul silences his father by saying, "As you are so rich, if money can do anything, and is n't cruel, I wonder it did n't save me my mamma. It can't make me strong and quite well either. I ■■■ ■■■ tired sometimes, and my bones ache so, that I don't know what to do," — a feeling of utter weariness possesses the attentive listener.

Dickens is also very effective in his description of Mrs. Pipchin, the great manager of children, "whose husband had broken his heart in pumping water out of some Peruvian mines." — "Well, a very respectable way of doing it," mused Mr. Dombey, to whose voice Dickens accords ■ hard metallic ring. Miss Pankey is never quite so much of "a mild, little blue-eyed morsel" as when Dickens relates how "she was led in from captivity by the ogress herself, and instructed that *nobody who sniffed before visitors ever went to heaven*," and Master Bither-



stone's perennial agony at being borne away "to have something else done to him with salt-water, from which he always returned very blue and dejected," is not fully realized until the author's reading throws light upon it. But the comedy does not get fully under way until the interview between Little Dombey and the exemplary Pipchin, where the old-fashioned child so "fixes" his teacher that she finally says, —

"Never you mind, sir. Remember the story of the little boy that was gored to death by a mad bull for asking questions."

"If the bull was mad, how did he know that the boy had asked questions? Nobody can go and whisper secrets to a mad bull. • I don't believe that story."

"You don't believe it, sir?"

■ No."

"Not if it should happen to have been a *tame* bull, you little infidel?"

The weird, reasoning boy is seen one moment, the mottled-faced, hook-nosed, hard gray-eyed Pipchin next, and Little Paul's earnestness is inexpressibly droll.

Although Dickens never waits for his "points" to "tell," — insisting that they shall take effect ■ they fly or pass unrecognized, — he neglects no word that can be dressed up to make an appearance. Little Paul on the sea-shore dislikes the company of his nurse, and is well pleased when she strolls away to "pick up shells and

*acquaintances.*" It never occurred to me that there was ■ world of meaning in this final word, and yet, after Dickens pronounces it, its significance dawns upon me, and I behold that nurse in all manner of situations, with all manner of people.

Solemnly funny with Mrs. Pipchin, Paul is solemnly grave with Florence.

"If you were in India, Floy, I should—what is it that mamma did? I forget."

"Love me?"

"No, no. Don't I love you now, Flóy? What is it? —Died. If you were in India, I should die, Floy."

How the tired head grows more and more tired in the endeavor to remember what mamma did! But there is hope in the voice and eagerness in the look when Paul points to the horizon and asks what it is that the ■ keeps on saying.

"Very often afterwards, in the midst of their talk, he would break off, to try to understand what it was that the waves were always saying; and would rise up in his couch to look towards that invisible region, —*far away.*"

Dickens is not a reader as others are readers. He is something better. There is ■ death-knell in those concluding words, "*far away.*"

Dropping the minor and taking up a major key, Dickens introduces us to Dr. Blimber's hot-house for the blowing of young gentlemen. He dives into the intel-

lectual garden and brings forth plums, upon which we feast as if they were a fruit just discovered and eaten for the first time. When Dickens produces the plum, Mrs. Blimber, it cannot be truthfully said that the lady "who was not learned herself, but pretended to be, and that did quite ■ well," is good enough to eat; but this particular plum is most certainly good enough to stuff and put under a glass case. She makes but one remark: "that if she could have known *Cicero*" (going from the bottom to the top of a vocal staircase on the name of this distinguished Roman gentleman), "she thought she could have died contented." Given a bone, the naturalist can draw the skeleton. Given Mrs. Blimber, as she vocally goes up stairs with Cicero, and the mother of Miss Blimber lives as long as we live.

As for Dr. Blimber, he may at any moment burst with importance. "'And how do you do, sir?' he said to Mr. Dombey, 'and how is my little friend?'" When the doctor left off, the great clock in the hall seemed (to Paul, at least) to take him up, and to go on saying, over and over again, "How, is, my, lit, tle, friend?—how, is, my, lit, tle, friend?" Dickens defies the great clock by ticking himself.

Ah, but Toots, Young Toots, otherwise "P. Toots, Esquire, Brighton, Sussex!" You may have loved him from childhood, you may have seen him without his boots, and sympathized with him in his unrequited affection, but until you have made Toots's acquaintance .





SAIREY GAMP AND BETSEY PRIG.

through the medium of Dickens, you have no idea how he looks or how he talks. When Toots puts his thumb in his mouth, looks sheepish, and roars forth, "How are you?" I feel — the man in the play must feel when, for the first time, he recognizes his long-lost brother with the strawberry-mark on his left arm. Dickens's Toots bears the unmistakable strawberry-mark. His sheepishness is by no means that of a country bumpkin. Toots is a gentleman. It is such sheepishness — only can accompany a voice that appears to proceed from some cavern ingeniously concealed in Toots's boots.

Dramatic genius may soar higher than Dickens soars in Toots, but when this heavily good-natured young gentleman says, "Sit down, Dombey"; when, after inspecting Dombey, he asks, "Who's your tailor?" when, turning the crank of his organ with one tune, he stares and puts the question, "I say, — it's not of the slightest consequence, you know, but I should wish to mention it, — how are you, you know?" when he dashes into Paul's bedroom and blurts forth, "I say — Dombey — what do you think about?" — "O, I think about a great many things." — "Do you, though? — I don't myself"; when Mr. Toots finishes his academic career, puts on a ring, and calls his former *head-gardener*, "*Blimber!*" when at the Blimber party his brain and fingers become chaotic in buttoning and unbuttoning the bottom button of his waistcoat, and turning his wristbands up and down; when finally, upon



being asked by Mr. Baps, the dancing-master, what is to be done with "your raw materials," he replies, "*Cook 'em,*" — I fear that I am tempted to throw off my allegiance to the Tragic Muse and acknowledge that comedy is, after all, the greatest blessing in life. The oftener Toots says, "*How are you?*" the better you like this profound question. It improves upon acquaintance, and you would very gladly take it three times a day all the year round — before eating. I hope, therefore, I may be pardoned if I venture to declare that the *tout ensemble* is perfect.

Who can ever forget little Briggs that has seen Dickens mournfully rub his face, — I mean Briggs's face, — muttering that "his head ached ready to split, and that he should wish himself dead if it was n't for his mother and a blackbird he had at home"? That blackbird brings out the boy-nature as nothing else can. When Miss Blimber tells Dombey that she is "going out for a con-sti-tu-tion-al," she is just as comical as such a "dry, crisp, sandy Ghoul" can be, — and more so. As Miss Blimber pronounces "con-sti-tu-tion-al" it sounds like a vocal illustration of a Virginia fence. It is here, there, and everywhere. Miss Blimber peppers Dombey with it; and although nobody in the flesh ever took such liberties with a respectable word of five syllables, yet the effect of this "con-sti-tu-tion-al" is sufficiently exhilarating to disarm the sturdiest Pre-Raphaelite. "*Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*" Mr. Feeder, B. A., also comes out beautifully in the recitation of that remarkable poetry, —

“Had I a heart for falsehood framed,  
I ne’er could injure *you* !”

But the old refrain of the old, old-fashioned child breaks in upon the merriment, and while laughter still rings through the air we stand upon the verge of a young grave. The little, thoughtful face, the tired, treble voice, come back and ask, “‘What do you think I mean to do when I grow up, Mrs. Pipchin ? . . . I mean to put my money all together in one bank, — never try to get any more, — go away into the country with my darling Florence, — have a beautiful garden, fields, and woods, and live there with her all my life. . . . That’s what I mean to do when I’ — he stopped and pondered for a moment, — ‘*if* I grow up.’” Dombey, Sr., Dombey, Sr., if one of your type be within sound of that piteous voice, his heart will soften, and his godless pride fail him !

To describe a death-bed scene, which is its own best description, is to attempt to paint the lily. Dickens breathes a vital spark into the text, and fills out what was previously an outline. There stands the stern father who bends down to the pillowed head, listening as the child murmurs, “Don’t be so sorry for me ! Indeed, I am quite happy !” — There is the loving nurse who holds the wasted hand in hers and puts it to her lips and breast. — There are brother and sister locked in each other’s arms. — There is the final moment when, folding his hands prayerfully behind his sister’s neck, the dying boy exclaims, “Mamma is like you, Floy. I know her by the face !

■

But tell them that the picture on the stairs at school is not divine enough. The light about the head is shining as I go !”

“The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion ! The fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion, — Death !”

“O, thank God, all who see it, for that older fashion yet, of Immortality ! And look upon us, angels of young children, with regards not quite estranged, when the swift river bears us to the ocean !”

Why is it that through glistening tears we see the imaginary pillow illuminated ? Why do we know that mothers who have lost young children listen with bowed heads and yet with overflowing gratitude ? Because the reader leads us through the dark valley of the shadow of Death into the bright gladness of Life Eternal.

Ten characters ! and Dickens fills them all without fear and without reproach !





DOCTOR MARIGOLD.

## VI.

## DOCTOR MARIGOLD.

OF all Dickens's Readings, this of "Doctor Marigold" is, from a literary point of view, the most complete. It is the most complete, because, with the exception of a few paragraphs here and there, it embraces the entire story as originally written. "Doctor Marigold's Prescription" is given and taken without any perceptible diminution of the original dose. What a happy, healthy world this would be if all prescriptions were equally beneficial in their results!

Who that has grown heart-sick at the hollowness and conventionality of "society" wonders why Dickens selects his heroes and heroines from humble life? No author has done so much to raise the level of human nature by simply laying bare the generous impulses of the lowly. The obscurer the profession, the more tenderly Dickens treats its followers; carrying out the scriptural prophecy of the first being last, and the last first.

In rescuing the Cheap Jack from the inevitable oblivion entailed by the expanding network of railroads, Dickens has laid a beautiful offering upon a neglected altar; and in himself assuming the character of "Doctor Marigold," he has made at least one Cheap Jack known



to thousands who otherwise would have passed him by on the other side, failing to recognize an innate nobility worthy of the highest station.

Less difficult of portrayal than any other Reading, — changes of character being fewer, — “Doctor Marigold” is nevertheless more entirely sympathetic, for, to use one of the Doctor’s own expressions, his simple, touching story takes hold of you and “rolls upon you” at the beginning and continues to roll on to the end. The moment that Dickens stands before his desk, which on this occasion is transformed into the footboard of ■ Cheap Jack Cart, he makes you feel that Doctor Marigold is a man to be loved. How is it possible, then, being *en rapport* with his second self, *not* to love him?

To all intents and purposes Dickens appears in a sleeved-waistcoat, “the strings of which is always gone behind”; and those who may boast of their eyes as “a pair o’ patent double million magnifyin’ gas microscopes of hextra power,” can very distinctly perceive an old white hat reposing peacefully upon Dickens’s head.

Perhaps Dickens does not give as much color and effect as might be given to the parallel drawn between Cheap Jacks and Dear Jacks, — as fine a satire on political hawkers as ever was written, — but the moment Doctor Marigold arrives at the Ipswich market-place and notices his wife that is to be “appreciating him wery highly,” the admirable portraiture begins.

Doctor Marigold’s description of his wife is *inimitable*.

"A man can't write his eye, nor yet can a man write his voice, nor the rate of his talk, nor the quickness of his action, nor his general spicy way," remarks the original Doctor Marigold, so it is useless to make the attempt; but those who have not heard and never can hear it will go down to their graves in complete ignorance of what a "*temper in a cart*" means. "Thirteen years of temper in a palace would try the worst of you; *but thirteen years of temper in a cart* would try the best of you. You are kept so very close to it, — *in a cart*, — you see. There's thousands of couples, among you, getting on like sweet-ile upon a whetstone, in houses five and six pairs of stairs high, that would go to the Divorce Court, — *in a cart*. Whether the jolting makes it worse, I don't undertake to decide; but *in a cart it does come home to you and stick to you*. Violence — *in a cart* — is so violent, and aggrawation — *in a cart* — is so aggrawatin'." No one but Dickens would have dreamed of this conceit. No one but Dickens can endow the doleful confession with such unconscious humor. There never was so much good humor in so much bad humor.

And what an important creature Doctor Marigold's dog becomes just from one or two references to his extraordinary sagacity! "My dog knew as well when she was on the turn as I did. Before she broke out, he would give a *howl* — and bolt." (The tone of the "*howl*" and action of the "*bolt*" are unutterably expressive.) "How he knew it, was a mystery to me; but the sure

and certain knowledge of it would wake him out of his soundest sleep, and he would give a *howl*,—and bolt. *At such times I wished I was him.*" As the dog bolts I think I recognize the breed, but, not being quite certain on this point, I shall not commit myself.

"The worst of it was," continues Doctor Marigold, "we had a daughter born to us, and I love children with all my heart." When the good Doctor clasps his hands and presses them to his breast, as if he were embracing that pretty daughter with the dark curling hair, you feel as if he really *did* love children. Moreover, you feel morally certain that Dickens loves children too. Does he not put a child into his books whenever an opportunity offers? And does he not make opportunities when they refuse to offer themselves? Think of Little Nell, the Marchioness, Paul and Florence Dombey, Oliver Twist, Little Dick, Tiny Tim, and the many outlines of little folks that are as good and better than most people's real children. Then he has written "A Child's History of England," and I am quite sure that he did not undertake it because children's books "pay." Of course Doctor Marigold loves children. Most expressive of tenderness is the way in which he holds a book to his breast when he is supposed to be selling goods with the suffering little Sophy clinging around his neck. The curly head is surely there, and the transition from the Cheap Jack wit, which Marigold hurls at his gaping audience, to the

caresses and questionings of the father are ■ artistic as they are natural. When, however, little Sophy dies without warning in Marigold's arms, and he staggers back into the cart, exclaiming to his wife, "Quick! Shut the door! Don't let those laughing people see! . . . . O woman, woman, you'll never catch my little Sophy by her hair again, for she's dead and has flown away from you!" the father's expression of grief is too loud for the situation. Marigold's endeavor is to keep the crowd in ignorance of his sorrows; therefore, however terrible his agony, he must surely muffle the cry of his heart. Did Doctor Marigold shout as Dickens does, he would alarm the entire neighborhood. Therefore, in spite of his earnestness at this particular moment, Dickens may be criticised on the score of exaggeration. The same words, delivered in an undertone, would be equally intense, and much more natural.

All liberally educated persons have seen at least one giant, and some of us have speculated with melancholy interest upon the private lives of giants in general; but none of us knew what any giant in particular went through until Doctor Marigold became acquainted with "Rinaldo di Velasco, otherwise Pickleson," who, when on view, figured *at length* "as ■ hancient Roman." "He had ■ little head, and less in it; he had weak eyes and weak knees; and altogether you couldn't look at him without feeling that *there was greatly too much of him, both for his*

*joints and his mind.*" Add Dickens's manner to Dickens's matter, and what wonder that our feelings are too much for us, and find vent in laughter over the "hancient Roman's" extremities? This "giant, otherwise Pickleson," confides to Doctor Marigold the sad story of Mim's deaf and dumb step-daughter, whereupon the Doctor remarks, "He was such a *very* languid young man that I don't know how long it did n't take him to get this story out; but it passed through his defective circulation to his top extremity in course of time." Well, I don't know how Dickens does it, and I almost believe he does not know himself, — the inspiration of the divine afflatus descends upon him, — but the complete vacuity of his face as he pronounces the word "*very*," and the languor which accompanies his delivery of this sentence, absolutely make you ■ limp in joints and mind as Rinaldo di Velasco himself. You begin to feel attenuated, and are only saved from long-drawn agony by Doctor Marigold's presentation to the giant of a sixpence, "and he laid it out in two three-penn'orths of gin-and-water, which so brisked him up that he sang the *Favorite Comic of Shivery Shakey*, ain't it cold? — a popular effect which his master had tried every other means to get out of him, as a hancient Roman, wholly in vain." The ludicrousness of "a hancient Roman" singing the "Favorite Comic of Shivery Shakey" is brought out so cleverly by Dickens as to cause you to become enamored of the Queen's English, convinced that no other language, living or dead, can express such humor as this.



Then Dickens goes to work — no, he never seems to work, and that's the beauty of his Readings ; everything comes without any apparent effort — and makes a character out of two remarks. Nobody can forget Mim, the “wery hoarse man,” the giant's master, after his declaration, in a bronchitis-ial voice, — sounding as if it had been rasped with a blunted file all the way down, — that he will exchange his deaf and dumb step-daughter for a “pair of braces” ; and nobody can forget the tender humor of Doctor Marigold in his narration of how he taught his second Sophy her alphabet ; nor the Doctor's account of his loneliness when Sophy is sent to school. At last the two years pass by, and Doctor Marigold goes to fetch Sophy. “The new cart was finished, — yellow outside, *relieved with wermilion*, and brass fittings.” Now the words, “relieved with wermilion,” as words, are not funny ; and yet when Dickens is “relieved with wermilion” his face looks such unutterable things that even the most stoical fancies, as did Sophy herself once, that the Doctor is the *c-a-r-t*. But it is only a fancy. Dickens is the living, loving Doctor Marigold, when he starts at sight of Sophy, who has grown up to be a woman ; when he dares not go to her, but rubs his hands together, and, looking down, says, timidly, “I feel that I am but a rough chap in a sleeved-waistcoat” ; when he at last takes courage to give her the old sign, and Sophy clasps him round the neck.

“I don't know what a fool I did n't make of myself,” says the Doctor, “until we all three settled down into



talking without sound, ■ if there was ■ something soft and pleasant spread over the whole world for us."

That is it. Dickens *has* spread something soft and pleasant over the whole world for us.

Having acquired an affection for "Rinaldo di Velasco, otherwise Pickleson" ("whose mother let him out and spent the money"), it is with delight that we at last hear him speak. "'Doctor Marigold,'—I give his words without a hope of conveying their feebleness,—'who is the strange young man that hangs about your cart?' 'The strange young *man*?' I gives him back, thinking he meant *Sophy*, and *his languid circulation had dropped a syllable*. 'Doctor,' he returns, with a pathos calculated to draw ■ tear' from even a manly eye, 'I am weak, but not so weak yet as that I don't know my words. I repeat them, Doctor. The strange — young — man!'"

"Bottom" once saw a voice. If everybody could be "Bottom" and see the giant's voice, everybody might go about with his own theatre in his mind's eye. Dickens outdoes himself. The contrast between the giant's purple face, swelling with effort, and the trickle of sound squeezed out at the risk of breaking every bloodvessel in Pickleson's head, is absolute perfection. A mountain never brought forth a smaller mouse, nor one that was so much worth the trouble.

What can be said of the remainder of Doctor Marigold's story, saving that it is charmingly narrated? When the unselfish Doctor puts Sophy's hand in that

of her young husband, saying, "Doctor Marigold's last prescription, to be taken for life," — it seems very life-like; when Sophy writes from China, "Dearest father, not a week ago I had a darling little daughter, but I am so well that they let me write these words to you. Dearest and best father, I hope my child may not be deaf and dumb, but I do not yet know," — Sophy herself could hardly read the letter with more feeling; when the Doctor "knocks up" his Christmas-eve dinner, and declares that such a beefsteak pudding as he made "is enough to put a man in good-humor with everything except the two bottom buttons of his waistcoat," — even the occupant of a boarding-house inclines to the belief that he too has had a sufficiently good dinner to be at variance with the two bottom buttons of *his* waistcoat; and when the Doctor is startled out of his after-dinner nap by the real tread of a real child, who peeps in at the door of the cart, exclaiming, "Grandfather!" and the grandfather cries out, "O my God! she can speak!" and when Sophy, and her husband, and their child, and the Doctor are "shaking themselves together, and the happy yet pitying tears fall rolling down the Doctor's face," — those tears steal into our eyes as well; and when Dickens hurries away, there seems to be more love and unselfishness in the world than before we took Doctor Marigold's prescription.

"If that fellar has n't a heart," muttered ■ broad-shouldered, fine-looking countryman who sat behind me

at ■ reading of Doctor Marigold, and who emphasized his words by thumping a soft felt hat, — “if that fellar hasn’t a heart, may I be everlastingly skewered! He ’s made me make a fool of myself, and I swiney! I wish Sal was here!”

## VII.

## BOOTS AT THE HOLLY-TREE INN.

THERE are some things that, once possessed, become so inalienably portions of ourselves as to render it ■ marvel how any one ever lived without them. Rubber boots for women, horse-cars, and watches are among them. What rubber boots, horse-cars, and watches are to the outer man and woman, certain works of art are to the inner man and woman. The light of the world would grow dim to many were certain bits of music, of canvas, of sculpture, and of architecture annihilated. This feeling is especially excited by particular books. Some books we approach on state occasions with much dignity and ceremony, knowing it to be highly literary and respectable to claim their acquaintance. We bind them in calf and give them the place of honor on our library shelves, where we permit them to remain undisturbed the greater part of the year. There are other books that we love just as we love intimate friends. We care not how they look, whether they are well or ill dressed, and in all probability we never ask them into the library. But we do ask them into our private room, and insist upon their remaining, that we may enjoy their companionship at all times and seasons. These are the human books. They

are not too good to speak to us in a language that we all understand, and confess to a sympathy with the frailty of our common nature. Such are the books of Charles Dickens. Occasionally we do permit his two-volume novels to go down stairs, and be imposing; but when it comes to his shorter stories, particularly those inspired by the approach of Christmas, we oblige them to remain *en déshabille* up stairs, that we may be talked to whenever we are in a receptive mood.

Unique, among these Christmas Stories, is "The Holly-Tree." That cold, heartless monster, the snow, never did a better deed than when it snowed up the bashful man, "Charley," at the Yorkshire wayside inn, in consequence of which the bashful man "began to associate the Christmas time of year with human interest, and with some inquiry into, and some care for, the lives of those by whom he found himself surrounded." The snow, I repeat, never did a better deed, for otherwise, by the bashful man's own confession, we never should have been made the happier by his "Christmas Carols," and Boots never would have related the adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior. So for once the snow thawed when it was coldest.

"But Boots's story is utterly impossible." Why, so much the better! Are not some of the most delightful stories in the world as removed from fact as fancy can make them? Was not fancy made for this purpose? Are we always to sit on a Pre-Raphaelite stump and contem-







MR. AND MRS. HARRY WALMERS, JR.

plate ■ Pre-Raphaelite cabbage? Do any of us believe in the possibility of "The Tempest," or of "Midsummer Night's Dream," and yet could we live as comfortably without them? If no one ever dreamed, where would be the consolation of waking hours? Fancy is the oil that keeps Reality's wheels in motion. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior, never thought of running away to Gretna Green. Of course not; but the charmingly quaint story is as pure and fresh as mountain dew. I would not lose the recollection of that little creature in the sky-blue mantle tucked under the arm of her young lover, who walks off "much bolder than Brass" (with a capital *B*), for a wilderness of disagreeable facts. Truth is not necessarily a virtue.

There are three branches on the original "Holly-Tree." Leaving untouched the first and third branches, which are better on the tree than off it, Dickens cuts down the second and brings it into the lecture-room that we may enjoy its refreshing verdure. In Dickens's rendering of *The Boots*, criticism does not know "where to have him." Search as you may for a weak point, the search is in vain; and after a first hearing you abandon yourself to unalloyed pleasure. Boots stands before you telling his story in his own naive way.

And Boots is a captivating fellow. I am not surprised that Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior, were excessively fond of him, and decided to give him two thousand guineas a year ■ head-gardener, — when the

time should come for them to have ■ house in a forest, keep bees and a cow, and live entirely on milk and honey. Such a man deserves such a salary, particularly if condemned to such a diet. You cannot avoid liking Boots when you read him; but when you see and hear him, the relationship is of a tenderer nature. For Boots is a diamond in the rough. He is distantly related to Sam Weller. He is a Sam Weller whose natural keenness has received no polish from city life, and whose humor has been softened by sentiment and a contemplation of nature as seen in garden-bulbs. I am not quite sure, — it is very difficult to make up one's mind on such an important point, — but I think that if I were in affliction, or even comfortably unhappy, I should prefer the services of Boots to those of Sam Weller. Prosperity, and the prejudice Tony Weller entertained against poetry, rob Sam of the one attribute needed to make him an angel. This attribute Boots possesses. He is a poet in disguise. This is proved by his delicate appreciation of the loves of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior. "On the whole, sir, the contemplation o' them two babbies had a tendency to make me feel as if I was in love myself, — only I did n't exactly know who with. . . . I don't know, sir, — perhaps you do, — why it made ■ man fit to make a fool of himself, to see them two pretty babbies a-lying there in the clear, still, sunny day, not dreaming half so hard when they was asleep as they done when they was awake. *But Lord! when you come to think of*

*yourself, you know, and what ■ game you have been up to ever since you was in your own cradle, and what a poor sort of a chap you are, arter all, that's where it is! Don't you see, sir?"* "Here's wisdom for you; chunks of it!" Boots's sum-total of life is as philosophical as his contemplation of youthful innocence is poetical.

"What was the curious-es-est thing Boots had seen? Well, he did n't know. He could n't momentarily guess what was the curious-es-est thing he had seen, — unless it was ■ Unicorn, — and he see *him* once in spirits at ■ fair." However clever we may be in the specialty for which we were naturally designed, not one of us but desires to be considered as born for something else, and we are never so complacent as when attempting that unattainable something. Even Boots betrays this amiable weakness. He approaches the word "curious-es-est," with a look of admiration, clings to every syllable with affection, and only lets go his hold because conversation would otherwise come to a dead lock. Therefore Boots goes on, and the richness, the flavor, the bouquet of his tone is as appetizing as transfigured bitters. When Master Harry says, "Cobbs, how should you spell Norah if you was asked?" and when Cobbs gives him "his *individual* views, sir, respectin' the spelling o' that name," one understands what is meant by the rare word "unction." The dialogue between Master Harry and Cobbs respecting Norah, is to the manner born, and childhood never was more deliciously illustrated than in the

air and expression assumed by Master Harry when, stopping at "The Holly-Tree Inn" ■ route for Gretna Green, he gives his orders to Cobbs. "We should like some cakes after dinner, and two apples — and jam!" If you have ever been a child and loved jam to distraction, — you never were a child unless you *did* love jam to distraction, — and remember how you gazed at it in hermetically sealed glass jars, with eyes as big as saucers, — wishing your eyes *were* saucers full of jam, — you know how Dickens treats this cabalistic word. It is your youthful aspiration, your eyes, your hermetically sealed jars reduced to sound. While Cobbs describes Master Harry sitting "behind his breakfast cup a-tearing away at the jelly, as if he had been his own father," you understand just how he *is* tearing.

"The way in which the women of that house," says Cobbs, "without exception, — every one of them, married *and* single, — took to that boy when they heard the story, is *saperizing*." (Cobbs is almost as devoted in his attentions to this word as to his former verbal *Dulcinea*.) "It was as much as could be done to keep 'em from dashing into the room and kissing him. They climbed up all sorts of places, at the risk of their lives, to look at him through a pane of glass, — *and they was seven deep at the key-hole*." By means of this key-hole, Cobbs unlocks the door to such sense of humor ■ has not been exhausted by the previous drain upon it.

Great as Master Harry is at the moment of his calling

for "*jam*," I think he is equally so when, upon being asked whether Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior, is fatigued, he replies, "Yes, she is tired, Cobbs; but she is not used to be away from home, and she has been in low spirits again. Cobbs, do you think you could bring ■ baked apple, please? Norah's rather partial to baked apples, *and I think one would rouse her.*" A father of a large family — John Rogers, for example — could not speak, with more confidence, or with greater knowledge of human nature.

But the pretty story, perfect as it is, will come to an end, and when — Master Harry stooping down to kiss Norah for the last time — one of the many chambermaids, peeping through the door, shrilly cries out, "*It's ■ shame to part 'em!*" that chambermaid springs from Dickens's head as Minerva sprang from the head of Jove, and stands armed and equipped for the fray.

Who, after listening to Cobbs, does not wish with him "that there was an impossible place where two such babies could make an impossible marriage, and live impossibly happy ever after?" and who does not shudder at thought of the era when universal education will have made such inroads upon even "The Holly-Tree Inn" as to abolish all use of bad grammar, and proclaim Cobbs's occupation gone! See Dickens in *his* Boots, and you wish universal education at the bottom of that well where truth is said to *lie*.



## VIII.

## MR. BOB SAWYER'S PARTY.

"THERE'S ■ destiny in these things, gentlemen, we can't help it," said Dickens's Bagman, upon recounting the prowess of his uncle in absorbing the contents of quart measures. The Bagman was undoubtedly correct in his deduction. There *must* be a destiny in these things and in all things, else Dickens would have gone down to his grave before being able to decide upon what selections from "The Pickwick Papers" to make for his Readings. To the mind unillumined by destiny, there seems no good reason why "Mr. Bob Sawyer's Party" should have been preferred to a thousand and one equally good episodes. In reading the book, this particular party takes no more hold of our affections than many others. Hence it is safe to conclude that there is a destiny in these things, and that Dickens was as much born to read "Mr. Bob Sawyer's Party" as he was to create it. After seeing him at this party, the hypothesis becomes as self-evident as any axiom in Euclid. What has struck you heretofore as a diamond no better than its fellows is magically transformed into a Kohinoor.

And when I say "magically transformed," I mean it in all soberness of criticism. Who ever thought, in reading



MR. BOB SAWYER AND MR. BEN ALLEN.



Pickwick, of giving any special attention to Mrs. Raddle's housemaid? Her appearance and disappearance are almost simultaneous. She is a dirty, slip-shod girl, in black cotton stockings. That is all. And what does she say? "Please, Mr. Sawyer, Missis Raddle wants to speak to *you*."

Anything else? Yes.

"Does Mr. Sawyer live here?" mildly inquires Mr. Pickwick at Mrs. Raddle's front door.

"Sawyer!" slowly echoes the Black Stockings, whose mental circulation is almost as languid as Rinaldo di Velasco's physical circulation, "O yes, Sawyer; *he* lives here. Sawyer's the first floor. It's the door straight afore you, when you gets to the top of the stairs."

And is this all? No; there is one more scene.

"You can't have no warm water."

"No warm water?" exclaims the horrified host, Bob.

"No," continues Betsey. "Missis Raddle said you warn't to have none."

"Bring up the water instantly, — instantly!"

"No, I can't. Missis Raddle raked out the kitchen fire afore she went to 'bed, and locked up the kittle."

Here is the whole of Betsey. From this small side bone that any but a consummate artist would throw away as having very little meat upon it, Dickens creates an incomparably comic character. The moment Betsey opens her mouth she is an accomplished fact. A dirtier,

more slipshod, more stolid, more irretrievably stupid girl never lived. Dickens's list of her clothes includes nothing but a pair of black cotton stockings, but when he brings her on the stage she not only wears black stockings with slippers down at the heel that drop off on the stairs, but a short gown, the original color of which is cleverly concealed by dirt, and a check apron, one half of which is conspicuous by its absence. Her sleeves are rolled up, displaying very red arms, and that portion of her scrubby hair which is not standing on end is maliciously attempting to put out Betsey's eyes. Betsey's legs look like sticks of black sealing-wax, as if in mourning for the rest of her neglected person, and are finished off at the knees with white strings. An owl in the brightest noonday sun never was more dazed or more incapable of an idea. A voice never expressed more thorough individuality, for Betsey has a cold in the head. She could not possibly fulfil her mission on earth if she had *not* a cold in the head. It gives a muffled, sepulchral tone to her words absolutely necessary to make what she says produce the desired effect upon Bob Sawyer and his guests. Betsey, however, is not such a fool as to be unaware that something must be amiss between Mr. Sawyer and his landlady. Consequently, the air of mystery with which she idiotically glares at Mr. Sawyer, or darts her head forward, — like a turtle from beneath its shell, — or slowly shakes that head, is not without solemnity. The amiable landlady, Mrs. Raddle, is quite as well portrayed; but

something is expected of Mrs. Raddle, whereas Betsey takes you entirely by surprise. If a donkey lisped in numbers you could not be more astonished. The former merely realizes fond hopes. The scene between Mrs. Raddle, Mr. Sawyer, and Mr. Ben Allen is a farce in itself, while Mrs. Raddle's final *exposé* of Mr. Sawyer's delinquencies, as she scolds over the balusters, the rumbling of Mr. Raddle's voice, proceeding from beneath distant bed-clothes, and the lady's parting compliments to inoffensive Mr. Pickwick, "Get along with you, you old wretch! Old enough to be his grandfather, you villain! You're worse than any of 'em," — are rich in humor.

Mr. Bob Sawyer is not *every* inch himself, for the reason that Mr. Sawyer labors under depressing influences throughout the entire evening. He is as much himself as he can be, considering the condition of his mind and pocket, and is really sublime in his impudence, when, seeing his guests ordered out of the house by Mrs. Raddle, he turns to Jack Hopkins with an injured look, and informs Jack that it is all his fault, "because he will sing chorus, — that he was born chorus-y, lives chorus-y, and will die chorus-y." This impudence is rather the more delightful for being an interpolation.

The only time we hear dear Mr. Pickwick's voice is on this occasion. He says very little, merely putting a few leading questions that keep conversation afloat, yet we recognize our old benefactor at once in the countenance that "glows with an expression of universal philanthropy,"



and in a blandness of speech that cannot belong to any one else. Several young gentlemen who attended the original party are not present at its repetition, Mr. Gunter, among others, being absent. His share in the quarrel with Mr. Noddy is necessarily transferred to Jack Hopkins, and the quarrel is really so enlivening that you long to have it become general; but at the most promising moment Mr. Noddy "allows his feelings to overpower him," and Mr. Hopkins prefers Mr. Noddy "*to his own mother*," whereupon the combatants shake hands with so much effusion as to strangle your blood-thirsty aspirations:

Jack Hopkins is what Bob Sawyer would have been, had not Mrs. Raddle's "malevolence" thrown cold water upon his ardent spirits. He is the ideal of all the medical students that ever had a talent for lying combined with a tendency to black velvet waistcoats, thunder-and-lightning buttons, blue striped shirts, and false white collars. The general inflation of Jack Hopkins's person; the professional cast of countenance; the voice which makes its escape as best it can between closed teeth, and from a mouth apparently full of mush; the hands that are thrust into pantaloons-pockets, as if to be carefully preserved for the next surgical operation,—an attitude that, when accompanied by ■ oscillation of the body, as in Jack Hopkins's case, always indicates superior wisdom,—are *sui generis*. He represents a type in caricature. All Jack's medical stories are good, but all are obscured

by the boy that swallowed ■ necklace. Even Betsey is obliged to divide the honors with this infant phenomenon. It may be doing Dickens great injustice, but it really seems as if he were ■ funny as he can be in this absurdest of burlesques. The law of self-preservation should prevent him from being any funnier, for, if he has no regard for his own feelings, he should consider those of others, and remember that people *have* been tickled to death. Peggotty would burst every button, hook-and-eye that ever approached her jovial person. Dickens makes the story ; the story does not make him. The inflections of his voice are in themselves mirth-provoking, the mere pronunciation of the word "necklace" inspiring as much laughter as is usually accorded to a low-comedy man's best "point." In one short sentence he rushes up and down the gamut most originally. Words can give no idea of the effect produced ; perhaps a wretched outline drawing may. For example :—

"Child

toys,

being fond of

*cribbed*

neck

*lass,*

*hid*

neck

*lass,*

cut string  
neck  
of  
lass,  
neck  
lass !  
of  
bead  
and  
swallowed

Those who have heard Dickens will understand this illustration, and may perhaps thank me for it. Those who have *not* heard him will *not* understand it, and will *not* thank me. When, after hearing a noise "like a small hail-storm," the father exclaims, —

boy!"

"Don't do that, my

and the child replies, "I sin't a-doin' nothing," where-  
 — upon the father rejoins, —

"Well, do it  
don't

— fun appears to have reached its perihelion, but when, after shaking the boy, the father cries out, —

"Why,

God bless my soul,

*in*

it's the child!

in the

*place!"*

got the croup

He's

*wrong*

—nothing is left for human nature but to laugh at every pore. If the public eye were not upon you, you would abandon yourself to an ecstasy of delight. Dreading that public eye, you swallow, not a necklace, but a pocket-handkerchief, and rather fear spontaneous combustion. Indeed, this story puts you in such good-humor that you are quite ready to shake hands with your worst enemy, quite ready to withdraw your former desire that he might write a book, and you go home from "Bob Sawyer's Party," wishing that all parties were equally select and equally entertaining.

## IX.

## THE TRIAL FROM PICKWICK.

THERE have been many trials for breach of promise of marriage, but none ever shook the world to its centre as that of "*Bardell versus Pickwick*" has shaken it. Building his reputation on a Pickwickian foundation, the corner-stone of which is this same renowned Trial, it was meet that Dickens should again bring this interesting case into court to be sat upon by an impartial jury of ■ New World.

Dickens's manner of conducting The Trial is irreproachable, saving in one respect. In other Readings he has displayed great art and sagacity in the selections made from his novels, and in the trimming down of these selections ; but in depriving The Trial of its fair proportions he subjects us to the "most unkindest cut of all." Assuredly the reader should be the best judge of what is and what is not suited to his purpose, and yet there seems to be no good reason for the wholesale employment of ■ pruning-knife in this particular instance. What Dickens suppresses would not materially add to the length of the Reading, while the amount of effect lost is very considerable. Dickens is guilty of unjustifiable homicide. How he can wilfully cut the throat of Thomas Groffin, the chemist,

thereby preventing him from being sworn in as a juror and indulging in ■ edifying conversation with Mr. Justice Stareleigh, passeth all understanding. Robbing Sergeant Buzfuz of one of the greatest points in his address to the jury is even more extraordinary. "Let me tell him" (Pickwick), "gentlemen, that any gestures of dissent or disapprobation in which he may indulge in this court will not go down with you; that you will know how to value and how to appreciate them; and let me tell him further, as my lord will tell you, gentlemen, that ■ counsel, in the discharge of his duty to his client, is neither to be intimidated, nor bullied, nor put down; and that any attempt to do either the one or the other, or the first or the last, will recoil on the head of the attempter, be he plaintiff or be he defendant, be his name Pickwick, or Noakes, or Stoakes, or Stiles, or Brown, or Thompson!" That Dickens should ignore this sentence, which may be called the heart of the address, and is full of just such effects as he best knows how to produce, appears almost incredible. Less strange is the suppression of Mr. Winkle's cross-examination by Mr. Phunkey and Sergeant Buzfuz, although no one who has seen Dickens in his great character of Winkle will ever cease to sigh over its omission. The most unpardonable sin of all, however, is Dickens's inhuman treatment of Sam Weller. He actually prevents Sam from making two of his best speeches. Said Sam, "I had a reg'lar fit out o' clothes that mornin', gen'l'men of the jury, and that was a wery particler and uncommon circumstance with



me in those days." "The little judge, looking with an angry countenance over his desk, said, 'You had better be careful, sir.'"

"So Mr. Pickwick said at the time, my lord,' replied Sam, 'and I was wery careful o' that 'ere suit o' clothes; wery careful indeed, my lord.'" Astounding though it be, the little judge does not give Sam his cue, "You had better be careful"; consequently Sam cannot make the retort courteous. And what is worse,—so bad that if there were a degree beyond the superlative it should be expressed by it,—Sam's final interrogatory remark to the Court, "Would any other gen'l'man like to ask me anythin'?" is treated with as much silent contempt as if it had never been made. The friends of Sam Weller should protest as one man against this indignity, and demand satisfaction of Dickens. Is this indignity to be taken "in a common sense"? or is it to be regarded from "a Pickwickian point of view?"

It may be ungrateful to look a gift-horse in the mouth; but when that horse has a beautiful mane and tail which are unnecessarily curtailed by too much "Englissing," should we not demur, particularly when that horse is Dickens's *cheval de bataille*?

Inner consciousness will accomplish miracles. It once evolved a camel; and I thought, not long ago, that it had evolved this famous "Pickwick Trial" so completely as to contest the honors with reality. I was mistaken, and now confess that I never knew how great The Trial was

until Dickens made a panorama of himself, turned a crank, and unwound the entire scene. The eight characters that figure in the court-room are matchlessly delineated, while the assumption of the court itself is truly wonderful. When Dickens appears as "the little judge," the theory of metempsychosis seems to be practically carried out. Dickens steps out of his own skin which, for the time being, is occupied by Justice Stareleigh. His little round eyes, wide open and blinking; his elevated eyebrows that are in a constant state of interrogation; his mouth, drawn down by the weight of the law; the expression of the *ensemble*, which clearly denotes that everybody is a rascal whether found guilty or not; and the stern, iron-clad voice, apparently measuring out justice in as small quantities as possible, and never going faster than a dead march,—make up an impersonation that is extraordinary, even for Dickens.

*Court.* "Who is with you, Brother Buzfuz? .  
Anybody with you, Brother Snubbin?"

"Mr. Phunkey, my lord."

*Court.* "Go on." This "go on" seals Justice Stareleigh's fate. The door of the court seems to shut with a gruff click, and the satire is complete.

Though a less original creation, Sergeant Buzfuz is truly admirable. He whispers to Dodson, confers briefly with Fogg, settles his wig, and proceeds to address the jury. The rising inflection—which, if not natural to Dickens, has been adopted by him to overcome the

defects of ■ imperfect voice — here produces most comical effects. “Never, from the very first moment, of his applying himself to the study and practice

*law,*

*the*

*of*

had he approached ■ case with such ■ heavy re-spon-si-bi-li-ty imposed

*him, —*

*upon*

a re-spon-si-bi-li-ty he could never have sup-

*port* *ed,*

were he not buoyed up and sustained by ■ conviction, ■ strong that it amounted to positive

*cer* *tain* *ty,*

that the cause of truth and justice, or, in other words, the cause of his much-injured and most oppressed client,

*must* *pre* *vail —*

*must* *pre* *vail !”*

The intonation and action accompanying the repetition of these final words are delightfully burlesque. Sergeant Buzfuz draws back his head and then throws it forward to add impressiveness to speech, while a muscular contortion going on at the back of his neck and rippling down his shoulders suggests memories of a heavy swell on the ocean. Truth and justice are evidently convulsed.

The Sergeant thrills his auditors by suiting the action to the word, and bringing down his hand with a mighty bang on the "box" in which "the unimpeachable female," Mrs. Bardell, is to be placed.

"Here one poor word a hundred clinches, makes!"

He is no less affecting when, speaking of his client as a widow, "yes, gentlemen, a widow," he produces a pocket-handkerchief for appropriate application, and refers to the late Mr. Bardell's having "glided almost imperceptibly from the world to seek elsewhere for that repose and peace which a custom-house

can never af-ford!"

bo-hoy,"

"lit-tle

If the

on whom Mr. Bardell "stamped his likeness," was ever as funny as Sergeant Buzfuz's mention of him, he ought to

have fully compensated "the unimpeachable female" for the loss of her custom-house officer. The ~~man~~ learned gentleman's rendering of the inscription, "Apartments furnished for.

*sin*      gentleman.  
             gle  
*In*      *in!*"  
             quire with

is such oratory as might move the most obdurate to tears. (I do not specify what kind of tears.)

A single gentleman is no sooner invited to inquire within than a juror, with an anxious countenance, expressive of a profound sense of responsibility, starts up and inquires without, "There is no date to that; is there, sir?" If I were a court, I should always insist upon having that conscientious man impanelled.

Mr. Pickwick merely writhes in silence, but when Sergeant Buzfuz directs attention to him,—"if he be in court as I am informed

*is!*" —  
*he*

and aims the forefinger of his right hand at the defendant's head, it becomes a query whether grotesque action is not as difficult to excel in as absolute grace. Dickens has learned its secret.

The great points of Mr. Pickwick's having once patted Master Bardell "on the head,"

*head!"*

*"on*

*the*

and of his having made use of the remarkable expression, "How should you like to have

*an oth er fa ther?"*

are brought out most effectively, while "Chops! Gracious heavens! and Tomato sauce!" and that other very remarkable expression, "Don't trouble yourself about the warming-pan;" together with the Sergeant's surprised inquiry, "Why, gentlemen, what lady

trouble herself about

*does*

*a warming pan?"*

received with all the approbation they so richly deserve. When Sergeant Buzfuz appeals for damages "to an enlightened, ■ high-minded, ■ right-feeling, ■ conscientious, ■ dispassionate, a sympathizing, a contemplative, and I may say a highly poetic jury of her civilized countrymen," his peroration takes instant effect, and he retires behind ■ round of applause.

Mrs. Cluppins is no sooner called than she appears, and in voice and physiognomy does ample justice to "Mrs.



Bardell's bosom-friend, number one." She assures my lord and jury that she will not deceive them, whereupon the little judge almost entirely covers himself with glory, by slowly shaking his profound head at her, and saying, "*You had better not, ma'am.*" The little of the little judge left unadorned by the before-mentioned enviable article of apparel is quickly covered, upon Mrs. Cluppins's remarking that she "see Mrs. Bardell's street door on the jar."

"*On the what?*" asks the judge in a state of owl-like astonishment.

"Partly open, my lord, partly open."

"*She said on the jar*"; and the little judge is at this moment a parody on all the legal stupidity that ever ornamented England's bar.

"Nathaniel Winkle," cries Mr. Skimpin.

"He-ah, he-ah," replies an embarrassed voice, and we meet face to face our old friend of the green shooting-coat, plaid neckerchief, and closely-fitted drabs. This easily discomposed gentleman is surely he who was so brave at duelling; who attempted to mount his horse on the wrong side, and when he got off the animal's back could not possibly get up again; who fired at rooks and brought down the left arm of his friend, Mr. Tupman. By the professional way in which Mr. Skimpin badgers our sporting friend and rolls the badgering as a sweet morsel under his tongue, — the expression of his countenance denoting positive delight in the work before him, — one





MRS. BARDELL AND FRIENDS.

might believe that Dickens had passed the greater part of his life in trying the law, or being tried by it. The scene wherein the little judge browbeats Winkle on the subject of the latter's name ought to be handed down to posterity; but alas! it never can be, and this is the worst of acting — and of posterity.

*Court.* “Have — you — any — Christian — name, sir?”

“Nathaniel, sir?”

*Court.* “*Dan-iel.* Have — you — any — other — name?”

“*Nathaniel*, sir, — my lord, I mean.”

*Court.* “*Na-thaniel Dan-iel*, — or *Dan-iel Nathan-iel*?”

“No, my lord, only *Nathaniel*; not *Dan-iel* at all, my lord. *Nathaniel*.”

*Court.* “What — did — you — tell — me — it — was — *Daniel* for, then, sir?”

“I *did n't*, my lord.”

*Court.* “*You — did — sir.* How — could — I — possibly — have — got — *Daniel* — on — my — notes — unless — you — *told* me so, sir?”

The contrast between the flustered stammering of poor Winkle and the impenetrable infallibility of Justice Stareleigh, delivered in a slow, authoritative tone, as if founded on the Rock of Ages, is remarkable. Then Mr. Skimpin resumes his pleasant pastime, — which may be likened to a mental bull-fight, Mr. Skimpin being the triumphant bull engaged in goring Winkle, the inexperienced matadore.

"O, you don't *know* the plaintiff, but you have *seen* her? Now will you please to tell the gentlemen of the jury what you mean by *that*, Mr. Winkle?"

After hearing Mr. Winkle's reply to this aggravating question, it is possible to believe that "even ■ worm will turn." Our sporting friend, as we all know, is not very combative, but wherever his combativeness may be situated, the goring has at last reached it. Mr. Winkle does not assault Mr. Skimpin, — for under greater provocation it would be contrary to our friend's constitution to assault anybody, — but he does all that may become a Winkle. He writhes in the witness-box; he grows so red in the face as to render his plaid neckerchief pale by comparison, and is only saved from strangulation by finding vent for his feelings in the words, "*God bless my soul! I mean that I am not intimate with her, but that I have seen her when I went to call on Mr. Pickwick in Goswell Street.*"

At this crisis Mr. Winkle is immensely satisfactory to his friends, yet he is almost as delightful when he endeavors to gulp down the confession that he *did* see Mrs. Bardell in Mr. Pickwick's arms, and *did* hear him ask "the good creature to compose herself." Mr. Winkle's attempt to swallow several of the most implicative words, which attempt is finally overwhelmed by a stern devotion to truth that draws out the facts with ■ species of mental corkscrew, leaves nothing more to be desired.

At the close of this incomparable examination, Su-

Sannah Saunders, "bosom-friend number two," performs her small part with credit to herself and Mr. Saunders, after which Sergeant Buzfuz rises to the occasion and cries out, "Call Samuel Weller!"

If conclusions may be drawn from the applause that greets this announcement, there never was so universal favorite as Samuel Weller. Everybody looks intensely pleased and everybody settles himself as if saying, "Now I shall enjoy myself more than I ever did in my life." Is it strange that many are disappointed? Almost everybody has a pet theory with regard to Sam Weller, and no two of these innumerable theories agree. Surely, then, it is not astonishing that Dickens's interpretation fails to satisfy unreasonable expectations. People look upon Sam as neither fish, flesh, nor fowl; ■ some *lusus naturæ* to be impossibly portrayed. Dickens's Sam Weller is a human being, very like other human beings belonging to the same profession. Sam has comparatively little to do in court, yet he is expected to crowd his entire life into a few sentences, that, from the very nature of the case, must be delivered quietly and with sly rather than boisterous humor. Sam never is boisterous, however. If ever there was ■ cool, self-possessed individual with a supreme contempt for people who, like Weller Senior, are given to explosions of mirth, it is Sam. It does not necessarily follow; because Dickens has created Sam, that he is therefore most competent to delineate him. Shakespeare never soared higher than



the Ghost in "Hamlet," and the impression left upon posterity is that he was ■ better manager than actor. Lee read his dramatic works like an angel; but when he strode the stage, the angel became a walking-stick. Sheridan Knowles was ■ shocking bad actor. But Dickens is so saturated with dramatic ideas, and embodies these ideas so well, as to render it safe to declare him the best judge of Sam's nature. If Americans were Englishmen, they would see the truthfulness of this portraiture. But nothing in the world can save Sam from being entirely eclipsed by Justice Stareleigh.

"Little to do and plenty to get, I suppose," exclaims Sergeant Buzfuz, referring to Sam's situation with Mr. Pickwick.

"O, quite enough to get, sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him three hundred and fifty lashes."

*Court.* "You - must - not - tell - us - what - the - sol - dier - said. The - evi - dence - of - that - sol - dier - can - not - be - received - unless - that - soldier - is - in - court, - and - is - ex - am - ined - in - the - usual - way."

The little judge covers himself with a second coat of glory, and the text furnishes Sam with no opportunity to establish his superiority over the most stupid and learned bigwig. As before intimated, Sam's best chance of being as slyly funny as he can be is in the expurgated question, "Would any other gen'l'man like to ask me anythin'?" By restoring it, and by illustrating how Sam retires from the witness-box, Dickens might add another green leaf to his laurels.

No one is disappointed in Tony Weller, because Tony Weller's most remarkable characteristics are his "hoarse voice, like some strange effort of ventriloquism," "the extreme tip of a very rubicund nose," "an underdone roast-beef complexion," and an unbounded stomach. Consequently Tony Weller has but to open his mouth to stand before us in his full proportions; that is, when Dickens assumes the rôle. His exclamation, "Quite right too, Samivel, quite right. *Put it down a we, my lord, put it down a we!*" takes the audience by storm, the author's identification with the character being complete. He not only talks like Tony, but, expanding under the influence of beer and countless wrappers, he suggests the immortal stage-driver's *personnel*; and when the trial is over, and Tony Weller moralizes over it, saying, "I know'd what 'ud come o' this here way o' doin' bisniss. *O Samivel, Samivel, vy warn't there a alley bi!*" it is hardly possible that the slight, energetic man, who, a moment later, walks briskly off the stage, can have produced so perfect an illusion.

## X

## MRS. GAMP.

THERE still live Americans who, forgetting the condition of this country thirty years ago, insist upon taking their Dickens with a difference. But, young as we still are, — for we have not yet shed our sophomoric skin, — I do not believe there is an American “erect upon two legs” who is capable of writing a book ■ “a just retaliation” upon English criticism of these thoroughly pure and perfect United States. There once did live such a being. In 1837 one “Nil Admirari, Esq.,” felt himself called upon to resent foreign insult in “a satire” entitled “The Trollopiad; or, Travelling Gentleman in America.” It is a sorry satire, yet it points a moral of such homely use as to be worthy of resuscitation to the extent of a few lines of “verse” that now pass for something worse.

“ Ingenious Trollope ! ■ forever dear,  
 Well known at home, but quite notorious here ;  
 To you, ■ first and foremost in the band,  
 I bow my obsequious head and kiss *my* hand !  
 O, smoothly — softly, flows this verse of mine,  
 So sweet ■ name should grace ■ lay divine.  
 Yield up the palm, ye scribblers great and small,  
 Faux — Fearon — Fiddler — Stuart — Captain Hall,  
 Behold your chief.”

Fanny Wright is vituperously annihilated as "brawling Fanny," and Fanny Kemble, the woman whom we are all pleased to honor, is impaled through pages of invective.

"Since truth must out; in vain the truth we fly,  
We 'can't be silent,' and 'we will not lie.'  
When known Initials meet the public gaze,  
And Fanny's pointless chatter — for praise,  
The rising voice of censure wherefore hush?  
For cheeks no longer conscious of a blush."

This is American susceptibility thirty years ago; and although when, five years later, "American Notes" were put in circulation, and were succeeded by "Martin Chuzzlewit," the indignation of no Nil Admirari, Esq., rose to the lofty height of a book, the press and people shrieked with rage, and Charles Dickens was more roundly rated than ever man or woman can be again, thank Heaven! It was foolish, unnecessary rage, that reflected discredit upon this country without in any way injuring Dickens. It was foolish, because it was childish; it was unnecessary, because, under the most aggravated circumstances, such an exposition is beneath the dignity of a self-respecting people.

No impartial, clear-headed reader of the present generation can lash himself into a fury over the "American Notes." He is amazed that anybody ever did become infuriated, and closes the book with a feeling of agreeable disappointment. For myself, I honor Dickens for speak-

ing the Truth! He did not come to America ■ ■ political economist, and therefore did not attempt to deal in profundities after the manner of De Tocqueville. He reported society as he saw it, knowing full well the consequences it entailed, yet knowing also, as he then said "that what I have set down in these pages cannot cost me a single friend on the other side of the Atlantic who is in anything deserving of the name. For the rest, I put my trust implicitly in the spirit in which they have been conceived and penned; and I can bide my time." That time has arrived, and when George William Curtis spoke for himself at the dinner given to Dickens by the New York Press, he spoke for the majority of his countrymen: —

"Fidelity to his own observation is all that we can ask of any reporter. However grateful he may be for our hospitality, we cannot insist that he shall pour our champagne into his eyes so that he cannot see, nor stuff our pudding into his ears so that he cannot hear. Dickens was obliged to hear and see and report many things that were not pleasant nor flattering. It is the fate of all reporters. I do not remember that those very competent observers, Mr. Emerson and Mr. Hawthorne, whom we sent to England, represented that country as altogether a paradise and John Bull as a saint without blemish. They told a great deal of truth about England, as it seems to me our friend told a great many wholesome and valuable truths about us. Naturally we did not find every part of his report very entertaining; but neither, I suppose, did Lord

Dedlock find "Bleak House" very amusing, and I am sure that to this day neither Sergeant Buzfuz nor the Lord Chief-Justice Stareleigh have ever been able to find the least fun in Pickwick. For my undivided thirty-millionth part of the population, I thank the reporter with all my heart; and I do not forget that if his touch, like the ray of a detective's lantern, sparkled for a moment upon some of our defects, the full splendor of its light has been always turned upon the sins and follies of his own country."

I honor Dickens most especially for daring to enter his solemn and indignant protest against the great wrong that in those distant days spread its virus over all the land, and made America a republic but in name. The wrong now righted, our flag is no longer a caricature on liberty. So to-day, conscious that we can look Europe in the face without danger of being upbraided for a national sin, wiser in head, calmer in temper, and with more regard for the amenities of life, we accept the "American Notes" as a record of a past to which we can never return, and agree with Lord Francis Jeffrey in the estimate which he made of the book in a letter that I cannot forego transplanting to American soil.

"CRAIGCROOK, 16th October, 1842.

"MY DEAR DICKENS, —

"A thousand thanks to you for your charming book, and for all the pleasure, profit, and *relief* it has afforded me. You *have* been very tender to our sensitive friends beyond sea, and really said nothing which should give



serious offence to any moderately rational patriot among them. The *slavers*, of course, will give you no quarter; and I suppose you did not expect they should [*sic*]. But I do not think you could have said less; and my whole heart goes along with every word you have written. Some people will be angry, too, that you have been so strict to observe their *spitting*, and neglect of ablutions, &c. And more, that you should have spoken with so little reverence of their courts of law and State legislature, and even of their grand Congress itself. But all this latter part is done in such a spirit of good-humored playfulness, and so mixed up with clear intimations, that you have quite as little veneration for things of the same sort *at home*, that it will not be easy to represent it as the fruit of *English* insolence and envy.

"As to the rest, I think you have perfectly accomplished all that you profess or undertake to do, and that the world has never yet seen a more faithful, graphic, amusing, kind-hearted narrative than you have now bestowed on it. Always graceful and lively and sparkling and indulgent, and yet relieved, or rather (in the *French* sense of the word) *exalted*, by so many suggestions of deep thought, and so many touches of tender and generous sympathy (caught at once, and recognized like the signs of Freemasonry by all whose hearts have been instructed in these mysteries), that it must be our own fault if we are not as much improved ■ delighted by the perusal. Your account of the silent or solitary imprisonment

system is as pathetic and powerful a piece of writing as I have ever seen; and your sweet, airy little snatch of the happy little woman taking her new babe home to her young husband, and your manly and feeling appeal in behalf of the poor Irish (or rather of the affectionate poor of all races and tongues), who are patient and tender to their children under circumstances which would make half the exemplary parents among the rich monsters of selfishness and discontent, remind us that we have still among ■ the creator of Nelly and SMIKE, and the school-master, and his dying pupil, &c., and must continue to win for you still more of that homage of the heart, that love and esteem of the just and the good, which, though it *should* never be disjoined from them, I think you must already feel to be better than fortune or fame.

“Well, I have no doubt your three thousand copies will be sold in a week, and I hope you will tell me that they have put £1,000 at least into your pocket. Many people will say that the work is a slight one, and say it, perhaps, truly; but everybody will read it, and read it with pleasure to themselves and growing regard for the author. More — and perhaps with *better* reason, for I ■ myself in the number — will think there is rather too much of Laura Bridgman and penitentiaries, &c., in general. But that, I believe, is chiefly because we grudge being so long parted from the personal presence of our entertainer, ■ we are by these interludes, and therefore we hope to be forgiven by him.”

As for certain American portraits painted in "Martin Chuzzlewit," I should ■ soon think of objecting to them ■ I should think of objecting to any other discovery in natural history. To deny the existence of Elijah Pogram, Jefferson Brick, Colonel Diver, Mrs. Hominy, and Miss Codger, is to deny facts, somewhat exaggerated, that are potent to any keen observer who has ever travelled through the United States. The character of Elijah Pogram is so well known as to constantly figure in the world of illustration, and we can well afford to laugh at foibles of native growth when Dickens devotes the greater part of this same novel to the exposition of English vice and selfishness. But if ever Americans thought they had reason to feel aggrieved, the night of the 18th of April, 1868, closed the old wound forever. Frank, generous, and just, every inch the man we believe him to be, he stood up before the Press of New York and pledged his manhood in these memorable words: "I henceforth charge myself, not only here but on every suitable occasion, whatsoever and wheresoever, to express my high and grateful sense of my second reception in America, and to bear my honest testimony to the national generosity and magnanimity. Also, to declare how astounded I have been by the amazing changes that I have seen around me on every side, — changes moral, changes physical, changes in the amount of land subdued and cultivated, changes in the rise of vast new cities, changes in the growth of older cities almost out of recognition, changes in the growth of

the graces and amenities of life, changes in the press, without whose advancement no advancement can take place anywhere. Nor am I, believe me, so arrogant as to suppose that in five-and-twenty years there have been no changes in me, and that I had nothing to learn and no extreme impressions to correct when I was here first. . . . What I have intended, what I have resolved upon, is, on my return to England, in my own English journal, manfully, promptly, plainly, in my own person, to bear, for the behoof of my countrymen, such testimony to the gigantic changes in this country as I have hinted at to-night. Also, to record that wherever I have been, in the smallest places equally with the largest, I have been received with unsurpassable politeness, delicacy, sweet temper, hospitality, and consideration, and with unsurpassable respect for the privacy daily enforced upon me by the nature of my avocation here and the state of my health. This testimony, so long as I live, and so long as my descendants have any legal right in my books, I shall cause to be republished, as an appendix, to every copy of those two books of mine in which I have referred to America. And this I will do and cause to be done, not in mere love and thankfulness, but because I regard it as an act of plain justice and honor." What more can the most rampant patriot demand of Dickens? Who is there that can henceforth refuse to do justice to his manhood, if not to his art?

I may be accused of having wandered far away from the

heading of this chapter, and yet how can any of us think of Mrs. Gamp without first recalling Martin Chuzzlewit? and how can the mind dwell upon Martin Chuzzlewit without reviving memories of the "American Notes"? It seems to me that at the present time such a digression is most pardonable, as it brings America and Charles Dickens face to face, and leaves them shaking hands in great good-humor.

When Sam Weller concluded the valentine which he wrote to the young lady whom he regarded with a favorable eye, he remarked to his father, "She'll vish there vos more, and that's the great art o' letter-writin'." In his reading of Mrs. Gamp, Dickens seems to act upon this Wellerian principle, for we most certainly wish there was more, and look upon it as an aggravation. To be deprived of an introduction to Mrs. Todgers and her Commercial Boarding-House; not to hear the sound of Mark Tapley's voice; not to listen to Elijah Pogram as he exclaims, "Our fellow-countrymen is a model of a man, quite fresh from Nature's mould! He is a true-born child of this free hemisphere! Verdant as the mountains of our country; bright and flowing as our mineral Licks, unspiled by withering conventionalities as air our broad and boundless Perearers! Rough he may be, so air our Barrs. Wild he may be, so air our Buffalers. But he is a child of Natur', and a child of Freedom; and his boastful answer to the Despot and the Tyrant is, that his bright home is in the Settin' Sun";—not to witness the presen-



tation of Miss Toppit and Miss Codger to the honorable Pogram, and hear their eloquent outpourings on that thrilling occasion, — “To be presented to a Pogram by a Hominy, indeed, a thrilling moment is it in its impressiveness on what we call our feelings. But why we call them so, or why impressed they are, or if impressed they are at all, or if at all we are, or if there really is, O gasping one! a Pogram or a Hominy, or any active principle, to which we give those titles, is a topic, Spirit searching, light abandoned, much too vast to enter on at this unlooked-for crisis.” “Mind and matter glide swift into the vortex of immensity. Howls the sublime, and softly sleeps the calm Ideal, in the whispering chambers of Imagination. To hear it, sweet it is. But then, out laughs the stern philosopher, and saith to the Grotesque, What ho! arrest for me that Agency. Go bring it here! and so the vision fadeth.” — To be deprived of all these inalienable rights, I repeat, is bad enough, but when Mrs. Gamp’s identical self is presented to us in a mangled condition, we are impelled to expostulate seriously. Mrs. Gamp is seen in sections. Large slices having been taken out of her, she is put together again so deftly as to look like quite a good-sized individual, but those of us who “know her for our own” perceive that she has been “led a martha to the stakes” of inexorable time’s decrees, and that her garrulous tongue has been so reefed as to carry but half sail. Such liberties are “Bra-gian boldness,” and quite sufficient to draw tears from



Mrs. Harris's eyes; but by Mrs. Gamp's own confession her "constitooshun" is made of Bricks, and therefore is capable of untold endurance. Besides, Mrs. Gamp is religiously submissive, as she herself confesses. "We gives no trust ourselves, and puts a deal o' trust elsevere; these is our religious feelin's, and we finds 'em answer." And Mrs. Harris also will take comfort, for "seech is Tife. Vich likeways is the hend of all things!"

Nevertheless, even in the form of a pasticcio, Mrs. Gamp is exceedingly palatable, for no one knows better than Dickens what ingredients to put into a pasticcio, or how to cook it. Taking that portion of Mrs. Gamp which is to be found in the beginning of the nineteenth chapter of "Martin Chuzzlewit," where this celebrated lady is first brought before the public, the feast is not permitted to be a movable one, but, by extracting ■ speech here and a speech there, and by addressing conversations to different characters from those in the novel, the entire scene is made to transpire at the house of Jonas Chuzzlewit. The episodes, the dialogues, are well chosen, — nothing could be better, — until the closing scene, when the human mind revolts at a gross injustice to Mrs. Gamp, and her great contemporary, Betsey Prig. It was not to be expected from the very nature of the case that the whole of the immortal forty-ninth chapter, "in which Mrs. Harris, assisted by a tea-pot, is the cause of a division between friends," should have been added to Mrs. Gamp's remains at the Chuzzlewit mansion; but it

*was* to be expected, in bringing Mrs. Gamp to a conclusion by the introduction of her difference with Betsey Prig, that the finale of this difference would be given in its entirety. What disappoints in Mrs. Gamp is the absence of a climax. It is the only one of Dickens's Readings that is not thoroughly worked up. Extreme length cannot be advanced as a plea, because Mrs. Gamp is provokingly short. Indeed, it may be truthfully claimed of her that she is as broad as she is long.

“Man needs but little here below,”

But “needs that little” strong.

No one is better acquainted with this universal law than Dickens. Yet in the face of what Mrs. Gamp would call a “mortar,” he concludes his Reading with this brief extract from the Battle of the Tea-Pot:

“ ‘Mrs. Harris, Betsey —’

“ ‘Bother Mrs. Harris!’

“Mrs. Gamp looked at Betsey with amazement, incredulity, and indignation. Mrs. Prig, winking her eye tighter, folded her arms and uttered these tremendous words: —

“ ‘I don’t believe there’s no sich ■ person!’

“With these expressions, she snapped her fingers once, twice, thrice, each time nearer to the face of Mrs. Gamp, and then turned away as one who felt that there was now ■ gulf between them which nothing could ever bridge across.”

Fancy the hardness of ■ heart that can steel itself against the Gampian exclamation, "Who deniges of it, Betsey? Betsey, who deniges of it?" when the tone of that exclamation might have been everlastingly embalmed in our memories! Think of the mental depravity which ignores that solemn injunction, "No, Betsey! Drink fair, wotever you do!" — that turns its metaphorical back upon the sage proverb, "We never knows wot 's hidden in each other's 'arts; and if we had glass winders there, we 'd need to keep the shutters up, some on us, I do assure you." Finally, — and this is the rank offence, — think of the inhumanity of an author who puts aside so touching and recriminating a peroration as the following: "The words Betsey Prig spoke of Mrs. Harris, lambs could not forgive. No, Betsey, nor worms forget! . . . O Betsey Prig, wot wickedness you 've showed this night, but never shall you darken Sairey's doors agen, you twining serpiant!" With this peroration all the other reefs in the Gampian sails might have been overlooked; without it, we ■

"will fight with him upon this theme  
Until' our 'eyelids will no longer wag."

■ Her name was Gamp." What the philosophy of the fact may be I am not prepared to state under oath; but it *is* a fact, that, of all the characters brought before the public by Dickens, at his Readings in America, but two have had what, on the stage, is called a "reception."

These are Sam Weller and Mrs. Gamp, the first mention of either name being sufficient to evoke a round of applause. Why Sam Weller should be hailed with demonstrations of regard is obvious enough; but why Sairey Gamp should be honored above the good, the true, and the brave, is almost as great a mystery as the existence of Mrs. Harris herself. For Sairey Gamp is not beautiful to sight, or sound, or sense of smell. She takes snuff externally as well as internally; she wears a rusty black gown and a red, swollen nose, and is irretrievably given over to cant and lying. What, then, is the secret of her immense popularity? If I am not mistaken, the applause that greets her name is the homage man pays to mother-wit<sup>as</sup> wit, regardless of its tenor. Man, in a sympathetic state of culture, can no more help appreciating humor than he can help being born. Now Sairey Gamp is a delightful old wretch because her mother-wit leads her into labyrinthine humor, the virtue of which lies in its unconsciousness, and the end of which is arrived at by means of a special providence. "*Il paraît qu'elle fait de la prose sans le savoir.*" When Sairey Gamp once begins to talk, there seems to be no good reason why she should ever stop; but she does stop, and always at the proper time. Some people who never wish to give credit where credit is due, insist that this is entirely owing to Dickens, who reports only so much of her conversation as suits his purpose; but I believe that Mrs. Gamp is a spiritual medium, in more ways

than one, and speaks when the spirit moves. Hers, too, is satisfactory hypocrisy. It is no "huge translation," but, like her false curls, so visible to the naked eye as to "be innocent of deception." She is her own signboard, and points in the direction in which she is sure to go. And, after all, Mrs. Gamp is not without sympathies; she does go down to see poor Mrs. Jonas Chuzzlewit off on that "Confusion steamer," the "Ankworks package," and delivers a feeling oration. Human nature is very much according to circumstances, and, did we occupy Mrs. Gamp's position in life, it is quite possible that we might look upon death and disease from a purely commercial point of view, and heartily sympathize with the nurse ■ she wishes Betsey Prig "lots o' sickness, my darlin' creetur; . . . and may our next meetin' be at a large family's, where they takes it reg'lar, one from another, turn and turn about, and has it business-like."

When Mr. Pecksniff applies himself to the knocker of Mrs. Gamp's front door in Kingsgate Street, High Holborn, and the neighborhood becomes "*alive* with female heads," Dickens's eyes are so distended at the extraordinary spectacle as to remove all doubt as to the possibility of such a commotion. When these ladies cry out with one accord, in a peculiarly anxious and feminine voice, "Knock at the winder, sir, knock at the winder. Lord bless you, don't lose no more time than you can help,—knock at the winder," the evidence is conclusive. The street *is* alive with married ladies, and they cry aloud



"as one man." There is the lady of measured medium voice and scrutinizing eye, who mentally sketches Mr. Pecksniff, and observes, "He's as pale as a muffin." There is the lady of nervous-sanguine temperament, who quickly retorts with a toss of the head, "so he ought to be, if he's the feelings of ■ man." There is the lady of a melancholy turn of mind and cast of countenance, the born victim of circumstances, who sees in Mr. Pecksniff her unrelenting Nemesis, and in a dejected but just-what-was-to-be-expected tone of voice remarks that "it always happened so with *her*." The three types of character are defined with photographic accuracy. The old motto "Life is short and Art is long" finds no exemplification in Dickens. He so fully appreciates human exigencies as, by a graphic short-hand of his own, to bring ■ vast deal of art within the boundaries of no time at all. Thus when Mrs. Gamp's dulcet voice is heard for the first time in answer to Mr. Pecksniff's raid upon the flower-pots, and she replies, "I'm a-comin'," Mrs. Gamp is her "indivig'le" self. The recognition is immediate, and the applause enthusiastic. Were Dickens nothing more than ■ voice, this most expressive she would still live, for it is such ■ voice! Take a comb, cover it with tissue paper, and attempt to sing through it, and you have an admirable idea of the quality of Mrs. Gamp's vocal organ, provided you make the proper allowance for an inordinate use of snuff.

Mrs. Gamp in the distance behind her flower-pots is —



Mrs. Gamp; but when she throws open the window and exclaims, "Is it Mrs. Perkins?" eye as well as ear acknowledges an unswerving faith in her identity. Mr. Pecksniff repudiates the Perkinsian theory, whereupon Mrs. Gamp again draws upon her imagination in the exclamation, "What, Mr. Whilks! Don't say it's *you*, Mr. Whilks, and that poor creetur Mrs. Whilks with not even a pincushion ready. Don't say it's you, Mr. Whilks!" I have said that Mrs. Gamp exclaims. It is a mistake. This pride of her sex never exclaims. There is an intellectual ponderosity about her that renders an exclamation impossible. She carries too much ballast in the guise of that ale known as "Brighton old tipper," likewise of "gin-and-water, *warm*," to give way to anything like impulse. The exclamation of ordinary mortality is with her a good solid period. She scorns staccato passages, and her vocalization may be said to be confined to the use of semi-breves, on which she lingers as if desirous of developing her voice by what is technically known as "swelling." She holds all notions of light and shade in contempt, and with monotonous cadence produces effects upon her hearers undreamed of by her readers.

"It is n't Mr. Whilks. It's nothing of Mr. Whilks's sort," responds Mr. Pecksniff, somewhat testily. It is very funny, but Dickens is not Mr. Pecksniff. We do not "behold the moral Pecksniff." Dickens's throat is not moral, nor does his collar say, "There is no deception, ladies and gentlemen, all is peace; a holy calm pervades

me." His hair does not stand bolt upright, nor are his eyelids heavy, nor is his person sleek, nor is his manner soft and oily. It must be allowed that Mr. Pecksniff is hardly more than a supernumerary in this serio-comic afterpiece, but Dickens always treats supernumeraries with distinguished consideration, and with him we are nothing if not critical. The old bookkeeper Chuffley, on the contrary, who is seen and heard but once, stands out vividly. "My old master died at threescore and ten, — ought and carry seven. Some men are so strong that they live to fourscore — four times ought's an ought, four times two's an eight — eighty. Oh! why — why — why — did n't he live to four times ought's an ought, and four times two's an eight — eighty? Why did he die before his poor old crazy servant! Take him from me, and what remains? I loved him. He was good to me. I took him down once, eight boys in the arithmetic class at school. O, God forgive me! Had I the heart to take him down!" The fine "points" of this short monologue are seized by Dickens. The picture of the meek, heart-broken, maundering, faithful servant, with decrepit figure, quavering voice, and trembling hands, whose ruling passion is strong even in the presence of death, and who can only *calculate* grief as an arithmetical problem, is painted in natural colors; nor is there exaggeration in the drawing. No less clever is the suggestive sketch of Jonas Chuzzlewit. "There is n't any one you'd like to ask to the funeral, is there, Pecksniff? . . . . Because if

there is, you know, *ask him*. We don't want to make ■ secret of it. . . . *We'll have the doctor, Pecksniff*, because he knows what was the matter with my father, and that it could n't be helped." With nervous manner, twitching fingers, and with terror written upon his face, the bullying coward, now bullied by his own conscience, gasps rather than speaks in a hoarse voice, laying his hand to his throat as if ready to choke down tell-tale words, should any inadvertently escape his lips. Dickens may not be able to look like a Pecksniffian hypocrite, but he certainly can look like a murderer.

Dickens is not as successful in the slight character of Mr. Mould, because of Mr. Mould's strong resemblance to Mr. Micawber. The little bald undertaker is very highly tintured with the essence of the incomparable Wilkins, and although the essence is in itself good, nevertheless, when employed as a flavoring extract, it fails to perform its earthly mission. There is undoubtedly something Micawberish in the vast importance of Mr. Mould's manner, but Mr. Mould is too excellent a character not to be originally delineated. Dickens's Mr. Mould is ■ very amusing person, — especially when, turning to Mr. Pecksniff, he says in an aside, "Very shrewd woman, Mr. Pecksniff, sir," referring to Mrs. Gamp. "Woman whose intellect is immensely superior to her station in life ; sort of woman one would really almost feel disposed to bury for nothing, and do it neatly, too," — but Mr. Mould can

never hang in the Dickens Portrait Gallery. — *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*"

Nor, alas ! can we ever see there the classic features of Betsey Prig. The outline drawn by Dickens is not the "counterfeit presentment," but a hasty limning, executed apparently without any careful study of the original. This is the only theory upon which the absence of a speaking likeness can be accounted for. Mrs. Prig has "a gruff voice and a beard," — a mannish voice, if you like, — but is not "a man for a' that"; and as the author of her being depicts this "interesting lady," she is superlatively a man. It does not for an instant occur to us that Dickens is anybody but Dickens in a demoralized condition of mind and countenance. There is no illusion, and notwithstanding that "the best of creeturs" bothers Mrs. Harris, assumes an attitude of defiance, winks her eye, declares "there's no sich a person," and snaps her fingers in Mrs. Gamp's face, it is not the Mrs. Prig we have known these many years. With Beau Brummel's unaccomplished neckties, this present portrait must be recorded among "our failures," — a failure that were easily retrieved did the artist pose his model carefully and begin on a new canvas. Should he do so, may he not forget to introduce a "cucumber."

— *Nous revenons toujours à nos premiers amours,*" and Mrs. Gamp so generously overflows the measure of our content as to soften the heart toward her professional partner. "And so the gentleman's dead, sir ! Ah ! The

more's the pity. But it's what we must all come to. It's as certain as being born, except that we can't make our calculations ■ exact. *Ah!* Poor dear!" Mrs. Gamp's "Ah's," like Mr. Mould's coffins, are ready-made to suit all customers, and are as long or as short as circumstances require. Sighs become the lady's station in life.

"When time shall serve, there shall be smiles,"

and whenever Mrs. Gamp sighs, she smiles in obedience to Shakespeare's text. The expression of her glowing face at this juncture defies language, however live, particularly as she remarks to Mrs. Harris, with a pendulum wag to her head in the *tempo* of a funeral march, "*If I could possible afford to lay all my feller-crecturs out for nothink, I would gladly do it, sich is the love I bears 'em.*" Doré in his best manner, which was years ago, could not have been more grotesque than Dickens is, when Mrs. Gamp's "half a pint o' porter fully satisfies; perwisin', Mrs. Harris, which I makes confession, *that it is brought reg'lar, and draw'd mild.*" Like the warrior's charger, she smells, not the battle, but the bottle afar off, and her whole spiritual nature expands under the genial influence. "She would infect the north-star."

But there are chords in Mrs. Gamp's heart that porter cannot reach. Those chords are only touched when Mrs. Gamp appears in the beautiful character of wife and mother. "The blessings of a daughter was deniged me,"



she informs Mr. Mould with ■ maternal tremolo in her voice, "which if we had had one, Gamp would certainly have drunk its little shoes right off its feet, as with our precious boy he did, and afterwards send the child a errand, to sell his wooden leg for any liquor it would fedge as *matches in the rough*; which was truly done beyond his years, for ev'ry individgle penny that child lost at tossing for kidney-pies, and come home afterwards quite sweet and bold, to break the news, and offering to drown himself if sech would be a satisfagion to his parents." Mrs. Gamp may not speak the Queen's English in obedience to royal commands; but the sublimity of her ignorance raises her so far above the rules regulating ordinary humanity as to render her conversation infinitely superior to that of the schools. A little learning is not only dangerous but stupid; whereas a great deal of human nature "in the rough," carries a force that bigwigs confess while they condemn. What flight of rhetoric, for example, can equal Mrs. Gamp's reply to Mrs. Harris's "awful" question, "Sairey, tell me wot is *my* individgle number?" referring to family extension. "No, Mrs. Harris, *ex-cuse* me, if you please. My own family has fallen out of three-pair backs, and has had damp doorsteps settled on their lungs, and *one was turned up smilin' in a bedstead unbeknown.*" (Here Mrs. Gamp suits the action to the word and smiles the smile of confiding youth and innocence. Its appeal is irresistible, and we rather wish Vesuvius were conveniently



near, and would repeat, in ■ small way, its dramatic performance entitled "Pompeii," that we might possess a cast in lava of an extraordinary countenance.) "Therefore, ma'am, seek not to protigipate, but take 'em as they come and as they go. Mine is all gone, my dear young chick. And as to husbands, *there 's a wooden leg gone likewise home to its account, which in its constangy of walking into public-'ouses, and never coming out again till fedge'd by forge, was quite as weak as flesh, if not weaker.*" (Could a constant stream of molten lava play over Mrs. Gamp's features, and by this peculiar form of douche-bath obtain her lasting impression, it would be better still.) As that wooden leg goes home to its account, the bereaved widow follows its translation with moist upturned eyes, while her reference to its superiority in weakness over flesh, is made in tones that carry enthusiastic conviction to the greatest 'sceptics. After this insight into Mrs. Gamp's domestic relations, it does not seem strange that the thrifty relict should have "disposed of her husband's remains" — particularly the wooden leg — "for the benefit of science."

Lastly, Mrs. Gamp is a philosopher, and shines as brightly in this capacity as in all others. She is ■ proverbial philosopher and brings wisdom to a focus in fewer words than many another of greater repute. There is ■ sibylline tendency in her look ■ she ecstatically gazes toward heaven and speaks of "this Pilgian's Progiss of a mortal wale," giving as her text for the sermon of life,

“You ought to know that you was born in a wale, and that you live in a wale, and that you must take the consequences of sich a sitivation.” Thus is the whole ground of existence covered. Misery can find no greater consolation unless it hug itself with the equally incontrovertible Gampian proverb that “Rich folks may ride on camels, but it ain’t so easy for them to see out of a needle’s eye. That’s my comfort, and I hope I knows it.” Soothed by these reflections, we take the consequences of our situation, and depart in peace ■ Mrs. Gamp withdraws from view.

## FAREWELL.

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“Should we be taking leave  
As long a term as yet we have to live,  
The loathness to depart would grow.”

“O THELLO'S occupation's gone.” The last reading has been heard; the last photograph has been taken, and the camera-obscura, which has done its work so imperfectly, is put aside. There is nothing left, alas! but leave-taking, and for the last time we sit in Boston's Tremont Temple to listen to the voice that has swayed us to smiles and tears so many, many nights. Crowded to its utmost capacity, the brilliant hall might be called, in honor of Mrs. Fezziwig, “one vast substantial smile,” were it not for the clouds flitting over sunny faces at thought of the fleeting pleasure. There is a cordial warmth in the atmosphere, for the audience has been magnetized into perfect sympathy and feels how good it is to be bound together by a common interest. The Reading-Stand wears an unaccustomed look, concealed as it is by a Florentine mosaic of nature's making. Roses, full blown, blossoming, and of every hue, — roses without thorns, — breathe their silent language of love; the he-

liotrope proclaims devoted attachment; "violets dim" grow bold to catch a glimpse of the hero of the night; imperial lilies bow their graceful heads in homage; the palm-leaf, flower-laden, tells the story of a hundred victories;

"And there are pansies, that 's for thoughts,"

which rear their little smiling heads that they may whisper in genial Boz's ear the words, "Forget me not."

We shall not forget the hearty welcome that greets the entrance of Charles Dickens, nor will he forget this red-letter night, the 8th of April, 1868. The reception, so full of tenderness and regard, steals away the artist's self-possession, and lays bare the emotion of the man. Looking at his new friends, that do not applaud and yet dare encroach upon his stand, Charles Dickens says: "Before allowing Doctor Marigold to tell his story in his own peculiar way, I kiss the kind, fair hands unknown, which have so beautifully decorated my table this evening." This graceful, characteristic acknowledgment brings speaker and audience still nearer, and the "hands unknown" wish the path, as well as the table, were strewn with flowers. Then follows the story of "Doctor Marigold," never better told, never heard with more responsive appreciation. The story is well chosen, for the marigold is "the flower of the calends" that blossoms the whole year and symbolizes grief, yet turns towards the sun as it speeds from east to west. However, the good Doctor's grief merges itself in joy, and so does ours

while Mrs. Gamp discourses ; but Mrs. Gamp is a fleeting shadow, and we stand at last in the presence of that grim skeleton, Farewell. It is in vain for Charles Dickens to attempt to retire. Persistent hands demand "one word more." Returning to his desk, pale, with a tear in his eye, that finds its way to his voice, Charles Dickens speaks.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, — My gracious and generous welcome in America, which can never be obliterated from my remembrance, began here. My departure begins here too ; for I assure you that I have never until this moment really felt that I am going away. In this brief life of ours it is sad to do almost anything for the last time, and I cannot conceal from you, although my face will so soon be turned towards my native land and to all that makes it dear, that it is a sad consideration with me that in a very few moments from this time this brilliant hall and all that it contains will fade from my view forevermore. But it is my consolation that the spirit of the bright faces, the quick perception, the ready response, the generous and the cheering sounds that have made this place delightful to me, will remain ; and you may rely upon it that that spirit will abide with me as long as I have sense and sentiment left.

"I do not say this with any limited reference to private friendships that have for years upon years made Boston a memorable and beloved spot to me, for such private references have no business in this public place. I say it purely in remembrance of, and in homage to, the great public heart before me.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I beg most earnestly, most gratefully, and most affectionately to bid you each and all farewell."

"*Forevermore.*" We seem to hear a funeral knell. The sad, earnest words, so exquisitely spoken, that they are set aside as never to be equalled, go straight to every heart, and when "farewell" is said, there's not an eye in the vast assemblage that does not glisten, there's not a face that does not reflect the hour's solemnity. Yet cheer after cheer resounds through the hall, hats go up, and fluttering handkerchiefs wave in the air, until Charles Dickens, fearing "the little more" that is too much for fortitude, passes out of Boston's sight. The good, true Commonwealth has taken Charles Dickens to its good, true heart, and there will his memory abide *forevermore*.

We follow Boz to New York, and on the 20th of April witness the "last scene of all." Suffering physically, sitting, not standing, Charles Dickens goes through the final ordeal, reading "The Christmas Carol," and "The Pickwick Trial" well, although but half himself. New York pays floral tribute as well as Boston; New York applauds, and then comes the second leave-taking:—

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, — The shadow of one word has impended over me all this evening, and the time has come at last when the shadow must fall. It is but a very short one, but the weight of such things is not measured by their length; and two much shorter words express



whole realm of o<sup>ur</sup> human existence. When I was reading 'David Copperfield' here last Thursday night I felt that there was more than usual significance for me in Mr. Peggotty's declaration: 'My future life lies over the sea.' And when I closed this book just now I felt keenly that I was shortly to establish such an *alibi* as would have satisfied even the elder Mr. Weller himself. The relations that have been set up between us in this place,—relations sustained on my side at least by the most earnest devotion of myself to my task; sustained by yourselves, on your side, by the readiest sympathy and kindest acknowledgment,—must now be broken forever. But I entreat you to believe that in passing from my sight you will not pass from my memory. I shall often, often recall you as I see you now, equally by my winter fire and in the green, English summer weather. I shall never recall you as a mere public audience, but rather ■ a host of personal friends, and ever with the greatest gratitude, tenderness, and consideration. Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to bid you farewell. And I pray God bless you, and God bless the land in which I have met you."

Rise, one and all; follow him with your cheers, and let silvery-tongued George William Curtis speak for America as he exclaims, "Old ocean, bear him safely over! English hedges, welcome him with flowers of the May! English hearts, he is ours as he is yours! We stand upon the shore; we say farewell; and ■ he sails away we pray, with love and gratitude, may God bless him!"

## THE VERDICT.

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THE curtain has fallen, and nothing remains but to hear the final verdict passed upon Charles Dickens. The impanelled jury pronounce him guilty of all the charges brought against him, and now, as in duty bound, sum them up.

### FIRST CHARGE.

That as an author Charles Dickens is without a peer. William Makepeace Thackeray, foreman of the jury, claims that he is the master of all the English humorists now alive.

### SECOND CHARGE.

That Dickens is one of the best of actors, and, an interpreter of himself, stands unrivalled. Our indebtedness to him is vastly increased by his visit to this country, for he has demonstrated by personal illustration the meaning of the long-neglected art of reading. He has shown us that it means a perfectly easy, unaffected manner, a thoroughly colloquial tone, and entire absence of the stilted elocution that has heretofore passed

current for good reading, the virus of which has well-nigh ruined our school of public speaking. Dickens has done more: he has proved that the very best reading is such as approaches the very best acting, and in adopting the actor's profession he has paid the highest tribute to a noble art,—one to which he has always been an earnest and devoted friend. Charles Dickens is now twice Charles Dickens. He is author and actor, as only Shakespeare has been before him; and the balance between the two may be considered almost even, for while Shakespeare is, of course, the greater author, it is safe to regard Charles Dickens as the finer actor! Herein the latter resembles the magician who pours out numberless wines and liquors from one small black bottle. He “costumes his mind,” as Carlyle once declared, and without change of scene presents a *répertoire* of eighty-six characters! This is but a small percentage of his Fancy's children,—the *dramatis personæ* of his fourteen principal works numbering no less than seven hundred and ninety-two,—yet it is enough. Nevertheless, were we the jury omnipotent, we would have Dickens luxuriously incarcerated until he had made a dramatic study of all his books, and was prepared to read them by instalments. Perhaps in another world, where time is of no consequence, Dickens may give his mind to a like occupation. With such audiences as he can there draw around him, it will indeed be “a feast of reason and a flow of soul.”

## THIRD CHARGE.

That, gladly borrowing the language of Horace Greeley, we regard him ■ "the most thoroughly successful literary man of our time" whose success "is an encouragement to every one of us." All reporters, all editors, cannot be Charles Dickens, but did all reporters report, did all editors edit, as their great example reported and edited, then might their light shine as it is not wont to shine. Let those who would know the secret of this success turn to "David Copperfield," wherein there is undoubtedly more of the author's personality than can be found elsewhere.

"I have been very fortunate in worldly matters. Many men have worked much harder and not succeeded half so well; but I never could have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence; without the determination to concentrate myself on one object at a time, no matter how quickly its successor should come upon its heels, which I then formed. Heaven knows I write this in no spirit of self-laudation. The man who reviews his own life, as I do mine, in going on here, from page to page, had need to have been a good man indeed, if he would be spared the sharp consciousness of many talents neglected, many opportunities wasted, many erratic and perverted feelings constantly at war within his breast, and defeating him. I do not hold one natural gift, I dare say, that I

have not abused. My meaning simply is, that whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well; that whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely; that in great aims and in small, I have always been thoroughly in earnest. I have never believed it possible that any natural or improved ability can claim immunity from the companionship of the steady, plain, hard-working qualities, and hope to gain its end. There is no such thing as such fulfilment on this earth. Some happy talent and some fortunate opportunity may form the two sides of the ladder on which some men mount, but the rounds of that ladder must be made of stuff to stand wear and tear; and there is no substitute for thorough-going, ardent, and sincere earnestness. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw my whole self, and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find now to have been my golden rules."

#### FOURTH CHARGE.

That Charles Dickens has ever been faithful to the profession of letters; that his career, as George William Curtis says so admirably, "illustrates what Charles Lamb called the sanity of genius. He has never debased it to unworthy ends. He has shown us that he is not a denizen of Bohemia only, but a citizen of the world. He has always honored his profession by asserting its dignity in

his name." Asserted by the man, & has been maintained by the author. The preface of the first book published by Boz — "The Pickwick Papers," — is a grateful dedication to Thomas Noon Talfourd, in acknowledgment of his efforts in behalf of an author's copyright. Never has this subject, so vital to writers, been out of his thoughts. "With regard to such questions as are not political," remarks Mr. Gregsbury, the member of Parliament to whom Nicholas Nickleby applies for the situation of secretary, "and which one can't be expected to care a damn about, beyond the natural care of not allowing inferior people to be as well off as ourselves, else where are our privileges? I should wish my secretary to get together a few little flourishing speeches of a patriotic sort. For instance, if any preposterous bill were brought forward for giving poor grubbing devils of authors a right to their own property, I should like to say, that I, for one, would never consent to opposing an insurmountable bar to the diffusion of literature among *the people*, — you understand? that the creations of the pocket, being man's, might belong to one man, or one family; but that the creations of the brain, being God's, ought, as a matter of course, to belong to the people at large; and if I was pleasantly disposed, I should like to make a joke about posterity, and say that those who wrote for posterity should be content to be rewarded by the approbation of posterity. It might take with the House, and could never do me any harm, because posterity can't be ex-



pected to know anything about me or my jokes either, — don't you see? . . . . You must always bear in mind, in such cases as this, where our interests are not affected, to put it very strong about the people, because it comes out very well at election-time, and you could be as funny as you liked about the authors, because I believe the greater part of them live in lodgings and are not voters."

Some years after the publication of "Nicholas Nickleby," at that memorable dinner given to Charles Dickens by the young men of Boston, in 1842, the subject of international copyright found expression in words that, be it said to our shame, still remain unheeded. "Before I sit down," said the honored guest, "there is one topic on which I am desirous to lay particular stress. It has, or should have, a strong interest for us all, since to its literature every country must look for one great means of refining and improving its people, and one great source of national pride and honor. You have in America great writers — great writers — who will live in all time, and are as familiar to our lips as household words. Deriving (which they all do in a greater or less degree, in their several walks) their inspiration from the stupendous country that gave them birth, they diffuse a better knowledge of it, and a higher love for it, over the civilized world. I take leave to say, in the presence of some of those gentlemen, that I hope the time is not far distant when they, in America, will receive of right some substantial profit and return in England from their labors ;

and when we, in England, shall receive some substantial profit and return in America from ours. Pray, do not misunderstand me. Securing to myself from day to day the means of an honorable subsistence, I would rather have the affectionate regard of my fellow-men than I would have heaps and mines of gold. But the two things do not seem to me incompatible. They cannot be, for nothing good is incompatible with justice. There must be an international arrangement in this respect; England has done her part; and I am confident that the time is not far distant when America will do hers. It becomes the character of a great country, firstly, because it is justice; secondly, because without it you never can have, and keep, a literature of your own." With this noble record Charles Dickens may rightly claim "that the cause of art generally has been safe in his keeping, and that it has never been falsely dealt with by him; that he has always been true to his calling; that never unduly to assert it on the one hand, and never, on any pretence or consideration, to permit it to be patronized in his person, has been the steady endeavor of his life, and that he will leave its social position in England better than he found it." Thank God that "morals have something to do with art," and that the genius of Dickens has realized this solemn fact.

## FIFTH AND LAST CHARGE.

That by his second visit to America Charles Dickens has fulfilled the prophecy that he would "lay down a third cable of intercommunication and alliance between the Old World and the New." Twelve years ago he wrote of the American nation: "I know full well, whatever little motes my beamy eyes may have descried in theirs, that they are a kind, large-hearted, generous, and great people." In that faith he came to see us, in that faith he is more fully confirmed than ever; in that faith he, on the 18th of April, 1868, pledged himself in the presence of the New York Press, "to be in England as faithful to America as to England herself." "Points of difference there have been," he said, "points of difference there are, points of difference there probably always will be, between the two great peoples. But broadcast in England is sown the sentiment that those two peoples are essentially one, and that it rests with them jointly to uphold the great Anglo-Saxon race, to which our president has referred, and all its great achievements before the world. If I know anything of my countrymen, and they give me credit for knowing something, — if I know anything of my countrymen, gentlemen, the English heart is stirred by the flattering of those stars and stripes as it is stirred by no other flag that flies except its own. If I know my countrymen, in any and every relation, toward America, they begin, not as Sir Anthony



Absolute recommended lovers to Legin, with "a little aversion," but with a great liking and a profound respect; and whatever the little sensitiveness of the moment, or the little official passion, or the little official policy, now, or then, or here, or there, may be, take my word for it, that the first, enduring, great popular consideration in England is a generous construction of justice. Finally, gentlemen, and I say this subject to your correction, I do believe that from the great majority of honest minds on both sides there cannot be absent the conviction that it would be better for this globe to be riven by an earthquake, fired by a comet, overrun by an iceberg, and abandoned to the arctic fox and bear, than that it should present the spectacle of these two great nations, each of which has, in its own way and hour, striven so hard and so successfully for freedom, ever again being arrayed the one against the other."

Amen, amen, amen!

With Landor of old, we of to-day are ready to exclaim,

*"Here comes the minister!*

Yes, thou art he, although not sent

By cabinet or parliament:

Yes, thou art he."

Charles Dickens is a minister of peace and light, and the toast once given by him in Boston is the fitting conclusion to a manly, generous speech: "America and England; may they never have any division but the Atlantic between them!"

In Charles Dickens, author and actor, man and minister, the New World bids the Old World welcome, and thus "putting a girdle round the earth," we say, as the new "minister" has often said, "God bless us, every one!"



THE END.